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[A MYSTERIOUS VISITOR.]

MY LADY'S LOVERS.

A NEW NOVEL.

BY AN EMINENT AUTHOR.

CHAPTER IV.

LORD RAIDENSTORE HOPES.

Far greater number have been lost by hopes
Than all the magazines of daggers, ropes
And all the other ammunitions of despair
Were ever able to despatch by fear.

It is the fortunate lot of man to have Hope by his elbow. Clouds are seldom so dark, or ways so tortuous, that hope will not point to a silver lining and a happy end. Lord Raidenstore was very persevering in his attentions to Lady Pearl and received no encouragement worthy of the name, but still he hoped.

Looking around him upon the little host of cavaliers that came and did obeisance before her, he could see none more favoured than he. Lady Pearl received their homage kindly enough but never let her smile show more than recognition of the attention. The man, individually, was not specially favoured with a word or look.

"And yet she is not ice, I'll vow," his lordship thought.

Turning to the glass he saw a man on whom a woman might be expected to smile—a little sensuous about the mouth, but otherwise a model of physical beauty. That he was a man of warm passions the world was already beginning to recognise, for he had his foibles, and just then

his foible was a star of the opéra bouffe, who played under the name of Emilie de Launay, whose real name was Jane Smith, and who was known among her intimate friends of both sexes as The Sunflower.

To see this beauty, dressed in the latest fashion, a shade too loud, lounging in her carriage in the park, or murmuring complaints over a recherché dinner that England had no real cooks, no one would have thought that she first saw daylight in a London alley, or would have dreamt that her father was a bootmaker and her mother a laundress—both dead now, thank God, and dying happily in the full belief that her mediocre voice and poor acting brought her carriages and diamonds and a villa in the shady groves of the Evangelist St. John.

She was a dark-eyed, dangerous beauty, and men who ought to have been wiser obeyed the crook of her finger and went whithersoever she directed them.

Her latest follower was Lord Raidenstore, whom she had quietly made up her mind to marry; but not having the entrée into society, she knew nothing of his eyes being turned in another direction, and dark jealousy yet slumbered in her breast.

Pearl, of course, knew nothing of her, had not even heard her name, although they passed each other daily in that dawdling drive in the park. What was Emilie to Pearl, or Pearl to Emilie—as yet?

There were times when the Sunflower demanded the personal escort of her latest lover, and he gave it with such discretion and judgment that Pearl never saw them together. Society beheld him and yet was blind on these occa-

sions; he looked upon society and saw not—discretion ruling the conduct in both cases.

Lord Raidenstore had, as he believed, a very generous opinion of women, but he did not consider them perfect. "They all have a particular god," he said; "in one Baal may be diamonds, in another a title, in a third a handsome house, and a handsome husband, perhaps; but the last can be done without if there is money to be had. Money is to them what honey is to the bee—indispensable."

It was, therefore, only an instinct which made some women worshippers of the golden calf, and he did not blame them for it. He admitted one all-alluring temptation to him, and that was—a pretty face with a figure to match.

The Sunflower's florid beauty was well enough for the time, but to Pearl he looked for a lasting bestowal of his heart, and if she chose to accept him, as hope whispered she would, the former could be laid aside like an old glove. That was the usual order of things in such cases, and why should there be any divergence in his case from the general rule?

He and the young duke were great friends. The duke had a careless, generous way about him, eminently calculated to win the good opinion of men, and it may be said to encourage the leeches who hang upon the rich and thoughtless and suck away their life and substance. Of these latter Melville had more than one in his train, of whom more perhaps anon.

"Shall I confide in Blackford?" Lord Raidenstore thought, and pondered well for a week before he did confide in him. The young duke was very busy with certain mental turf calculations when he received his confidences, and to all he said replied:

"Certainly! Why not?"

"Then, I have at least, your approval, Blackford?"

"If my approval is worth anything—yes."

Elated beyond measure at having thus far gained ground, Lord Raidenstore, in happy ignorance of his friend not having heeded even the subject he was talking of, went off to an evening party, small and early, given by Lady Ardinlaun. The guests were few and well selected, comprising a number of very eligible young men and a balancing party of married people, some with daughters, among whom were Sir Charles and Lady Friarly. Sir Charles was seated by Lady Pearl, in high favour with her just then, for he was a married man and safe to talk to. The single gentlemen bored Lady Pearl, for no particular reason she could have given, if asked.

Was it because Hugh Egerton was not there? He had been asked but had not put in an appearance, and every time the door opened her eyes wandered to it and from the subject her companion was speaking of, he watching her closely meanwhile and trying to work out a problem that was not to be answered that night.

Finding himself shut out for the time from Lady Pearl, Lord Raidenstore gave himself up to the next best-looking woman in the room, Lady Friarly, who sat alone with a rigid face that scarce changed its expression when she gave him greeting. They were familiar acquaintances, and he sat down beside her.

"You are disappointed," she said, with a strange smile breaking the hard lines about her mouth.

"You refer to my being debarred doing homage to Lady Pearl?" he replied, airily.

"Of course I do. If you could be near her you would be like the rest."

"I shall have my turn, Lady Friarly."

"And when you get it," she said, "make the most of it—unless you wish to lose her. Oh! don't raise your eyebrows as if you did not understand me. I have read yours once plainly, and my prescription is—Lose no time."

"So discerning a physician, if indeed I am sick, ought to be obeyed."

"And if you should win her," said Lady Friarly, "don't—Will you think me rude if I prescribe for you after marriage as well as before it?"

"Not at all," he said, quietly, wondering at her strange manner and speech.

"Well, when you have won her," said Lady Friarly, "don't take advantage of the lax laws of society and give all your time and attention to other women. It is not right or just, and it does more than all else to mar the happiness of a place that should be home."

"Jealous, by Jingo!" thought Lord Raidenstore. Aloud he said: "I only hope that I may have the opportunity to follow your advice. But remember—I confide in you—I may never be favoured."

They sat silent for a few moments, he scarcely knowing how to go on. She relieved him by introducing her own affairs.

"You think I am jealous?" she said.

"Well, really, Lady Friarly," he stammered, "I—I—have no right to think at all."

"You cannot help thinking," she said, emphatically, "and you fancy that I am jealous of Sir Charles paying attentions to Lady Pearl. Jealous of *her* indeed!"

"On my word," thought Lord Raidenstore, uneasily, "I think this woman is going mad. Friarly isn't kind to her, I know, and it's a shame."

"You can go now," said Lady Friarly. "Some of the devoted worshippers, getting little answer for their prayers, are going away from the goddess."

"Unless you wish me to leave you," he said, gallantly, "I will not go."

"Consult your own wishes."

"—on I will stay."

It was perhaps a poor thing to be proud of, but the beautiful, neglected woman felt her heart grow warm on finding she had the power to charm. Lord Raidenstore, urged by pity, made himself extremely agreeable, and smoozied

the ruffled face until its beauty was entirely restored.

On seeing how his work prospered, he too was flattered, and remained with her until Sir Charles suddenly appeared before them.

"I am sorry to disturb you, Mildred," he said, "but do you think it is too early to go?"

"Much too early," she replied, coldly.

"But do not forget that you have to show at least at Mrs. Vavasour's ball."

"An hour hence will do for that."

"Very well," he said, and, bowing, left her.

As he turned away an expression of regret passed over her face, and she would have called him back but for the whispering of that bitter demon who makes so many quarrels and who bears the name of Pride.

But she dismissed her cavalier.

"You really must go now," she said, "Lady Pearl has been looking this way half a score times, and evidently expects you."

He had no excuse for staying by her side any longer, and went over to Pearl, who was engaged in talking to an old Scotch peer, a friend of the Ardinlauns. The old man vacated his seat for the younger, and Lord Raidenstore sat down by her.

"Have you seen Melville to-day?" she asked.

"I parted with him an hour ago," replied he.

"I know you are a great friend of his, and can confide in you. Lord Ardinlaun is getting uneasy about him. He thinks he has mixed himself up with a bad set. Is it true?"

"How am I to answer you? That which I would say I dare not, for the secrets of friendship, like those of love, are sacred."

"I understand you," replied Pearl, "but mine is not an idle question, and I do not wish to make you a spy upon your friend. But will you help me to rescue Melville?"

"I will, indeed—if it's in my power," he said.

"Will you then—for his sake and mine—tell me if he is indeed travelling the road to ruin?"

"I cannot say so much, but he dabbles on the turf—"

"And he spends a great deal of money?"

"I fear so."

"And gets that money by doing bills with the Jews?"

"I think so; but again let me ask you not to expect too much from me. In any other way command me. My devotion, my—"

"If you do not help us," said Lady Pearl, with a despairing look, "poor Melville will suffer. He is so generous that he never thinks of self. Lord Ardinlaun was suggesting that his bills should be bought up privately at once to save exorbitant interest. Could you put us into the way of doing it?"

"I think I could," said Lord Raidenstore, gravely, "but having done so what plan do you propose to pursue? It will simply clear the market and leave him to begin all over again."

"Oh, Lord Ardinlaun has a plan," said Pearl, with a smile, "which I think will check him. You will help us, will you not?"

"With all my heart."

"Then call here to-morrow morning at eleven."

Her eyes expressed gratitude, and he thought a warmer feeling lay there. If he had obtained a fair chance of proposing he would have rushed in, but it was denied him. Lady Pearl either could not or would not understand the leading soft words he uttered, and he went away without attaining his purpose.

But he was to see her on the morrow; he was in her confidence, and he had hope so strong that he felt it imperative that he and Emilie de Launay should come to an understanding and part.

He had no especial appointment with her that evening, nor was she "receiving," but with her the ordinary formalities could be waived, and he took a hansom to her villa, where he arrived

almost in company with the well-appointed brougham which brought her from the theatre where she had been enrapturing her gay admirers in the stalls with her archness, her singing, her beautifully-turned instep, and her dark, languishing eyes.

"I did not expect you, Raidy," she said, as he entered the drawing-room, where she was sitting, a little worn out with her evening's exertion, and waiting for the servant to bring her some reviving champagne.

"No, Sunny," he replied, "I hardly expected I should be able to come myself. But it was very necessary that I should see you at once."

He drew a chair up to the couch on which she reposed with studied grace (the attitude would have driven the gables in the stalls frantic with admiration) and laid a hand upon her arm.

"Sunny," he said, "don't you think we have been fooling long enough?"

She turned her eyes to his, wondering what was coming, but did not find there what she expected. A slight crevice appeared on her forehead just between the eyes.

"What a question," she said, with assumed indifference.

"It is an important one—in some respects," he said, uneasily, and— But, Sunny, what do you think? We have been very fond of each other, and been very happy together, but there comes a time when—"

"What are you driving at?" she asked, tartly.

"Are you tired of me?"

"Oh, no—not at all—but it is expected of a man in my position that he should settle down early, take to his country seat, and so on, and I must do as the rest. There is the lease of the house paid for, and you can stop in it for two years more, and I thought if I wrote a cheque for five hundred pounds you would not miss me very much."

It was a horribly lame way of putting the object he had down before her, and he winced as he saw the contemptuous curl of lip. Not getting any reply from her he went on:

"You see, Sunny, as we must part, I should like to do the handsome thing by you. It is usually done by a man of honour, and what a man like me—"

"Is dealing with such a woman as I am," she interposed, "he thinks he may say anything or do anything. Confound you for a snob."

He started and stared at her as she sprang into a sitting position with hands clenched and eyes flashing. Whatever she might have sprung from, however debased she might have been, there was something of the woman in her still. There was a chord in her that could be struck, and he had touched it rudely.

"Rather than accept a penny from you or live another hour beneath a roof that is yours," she said, "I would lie down in the streets and die. I do not say that I have a right, as the world views things, to expect better treatment from you, but it is none the less bitter to me. So now you have done with your toy, it is to be turned aside for beggar or prince to pick up and play with as Fortune may decide."

"If I mistake not," he said, with his coolness recovered, "that your last remark is from the thrilling play of 'Prince and Peasant,' in which you made your first hit. It is a form of heroics for which I have no taste. Will you act and talk like a sensible woman? Will you keep the house?"

"No?"

"Will you have my cheque?"

"No."

"Very good," he said, rising, "but we must part all the same, and I have the honour to bid you good evening."

It was his victory now, and she let him go without another word, but when he was gone she paced up and down the room with the eyes of an angry tigress, and as she walked there came hissing through her lips:

"Who is the woman that has come between him and me?"

CHAPTER V.

TWO PEOPLE AT HOME.

To mortal men great loads allotted be,
But of all packs no pack like poverty.

Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmation strong
As proofs of Holy Writ.

HUGH EGERTON, without being absolutely a man of mystery, was nevertheless a puzzle to those who knew him. When at the university his residence was of necessity with the rest of the students, but during the vacations he had no known home.

If in town his letters were sent to a small private club of which he was a member. Where he actually resided nobody knew.

"Egerton looks like a man with a drag upon him," said Tommy Dray. "There is something of the shackled antelope about him. He would go ahead if he could."

Tommy Dray was presumably a free man. He had money, health, and a cheerful countenance. Smiles were as natural to him as songs are to birds, and his love for his fellows was genuine and deep.

Tommy's purse was always open, like his ear, to a tale of woe, and certain metropolitan beggars had learnt to know him, and looked forward to his arrival as the great event of the season.

There were others too, not beggars in the world's eyes, but men who wore clothes of a perfect cut, and mixed with the élite of society, who also regarded Tommy's coming with a favourable eye. No man more readily lent a fiver or backed a bill, and being deceived by one did not destroy his faith in another.

"I believe they would pay if they could," Tommy would say, when writing out the cheques, "and if they haven't the money how are they to do it?"

Now this same good-hearted fellow had been to Cambridge, where he was rusticated for the misdeeds of another. Circumstantial evidence pointed to Tommy as being the gentleman who painted the proctor's door in stripes of red, white, and blue, and screwed him up in his rooms while the Marcellaise was villainously played on a tin whistle. Tommy played such a whistle, he did not deny that, but he said he did not commit that outrage on the proctor. Not being believed he was requested to depart.

Among the men he knew was Hugh Egerton, in whom he took a great interest. They often met and spoke, but were intimates rather than friends, for Hugh was reserved and held aloof from men. Tommy Dray would have preferred their acquaintance ripening into friendship.

He was in town as usual, and he had seen Hugh twice, but Hugh appeared to shun him, and Tommy was vexed. There were few men whom he liked so well, and Tommy liked his warmer feelings to be reciprocated.

On the afternoon of the day when Hugh Egerton was expected at Lady Ardinlaun's "at home" the two acquaintances met in Oxford Street. Tommy was lounging about and looking at the shops, and Hugh was hurrying in an eastward direction. They met, so closely that to avoid speaking would have been uncourteous, and they shook hands.

"Where on earth do you hide yourself, Egerton?" Tommy Dray asked.

"Oh! I read here almost as much as I do at college," replied Hugh, evasively.

"Do you, by George!" exclaimed Tommy, admiringly. "Well, I suppose somebody must do it. I never read at all. Are you going anywhere particularly?"

"No, not very particularly, only to my home."

"Home—this way? But forgive me, old fellow, I have no right to be impertinent. I am not a prying sort of fellow, but I do wish you would let me know more about yourself. You know I like you, Egerton."

"I believe you do," said Egerton, with a smile, "and I have no intense hatred for you."

"Then we are friends," urged Tommy. "Come, old fellow, if you are tight up for cash—"

"I never borrow," said Hugh, hastily. "But as you are, I believe, a thorough good fellow, I'll trust you with the secret of my den. Come along."

He took his arm and hurried him down to High Holborn, when he turned into a street full of dingy houses and dingy shops, and finally landed him in the upper part of a house half way down the thoroughfare.

The apartment was a meagre one, and the furniture so old and poor that Tommy shuddered as he contemplated it. The door of an inner room stood partly open, revealing a camp bed and a few necessities of a bachelor's sleeping apartment.

"You don't mean to say this is your diggings?" said Tommy.

"I do," replied Hugh; "the best I can afford—at present."

"But a college man, and a bit of a swell—"

"I understand you, Dray. But don't you see that it is not easy to shake off everything we have been born to? I have two hundred a-year private property, and a drain upon that, so what with college fees and inevitable expenses I must cut it fine somewhere or run into debt."

"I think I should run into debt," said Tommy, sadly, shaking his head. "But how odd it seems—some fellows with such a lot of tin, others with none. Now I could spare—"

"Nothing for me," said Hugh, laughing; "excepting this pinch I have little to complain of, and I don't suppose it will last long. I have taken my degree and I must now begin life in earnest. I suppose I shall have to teach while I think over the future."

"If I were you," said Tommy, "I think I should look after a girl with a lot of tin."

"Would you?" said Hugh, smiling faintly. "I am not so bold an adventurer."

"Then you ought to be, for you are the sort of fellow to carry off the prizes. Now, there is Lady Pearl—"

Hugh turned quickly to the window and raised the sash.

"Let us have a little more air," he said. "These rooms are almost unbearable in the warm weather. But you were saying that Miss Warrentin—"

"Miss Warrentin be bothered! I was speaking of Lady Pearl. She has money, and I saw her talking with you the other day in a way she doesn't favour everybody with."

"You must not speak of her to me, Dray," said Hugh, gloomily. "God forbid that I should bring another into the dark valley of my life! No! I must go on alone—alone, until I am rich and with my own hands alone cast off—but what am I saying? I do not think I am quite in my right mind to-day, or I should not have brought you here."

"Surely you don't think I'm a blab?" asked Tommy, reproachfully.

"What matter if you are?" said Hugh, bitterly. "I was thinking this morning of the utter weariness of my lot—the hopelessness of it, and the madness and folly of my loving—"

"You in love, Egerton?"

"God help me—yes! and now, Dray, I have confided everything to you, and there is no more to tell. Will you have a smoke and a little brandy and water? I can't afford wine even to visitors."

"I'll have a smoke," said Tommy, "and afterwards we will go somewhere and dine. Try one of my cheroots."

"Here," said Hugh, "I smoke a pipe."

Under the influence of the fragrant weed a more cheery tone was given to the conversation. Hugh pointed out certain little contrivances of his own to make the room more comfortable, and dilated with some humour upon the various little difficulties he experienced with the slavery who looked after his rooms.

"She has a tender heart," he said, "and will not use even a broom too roughly, so I have bought one, and I give the place a brush out occasionally."

"On my word," said Tommy, "I honour you for it. Now I have got used to the place I can see that it is clean. There is quite a polish on it. But I should like to see your slavey—per-

haps that is her coming? I hear a soft footstep on the stair."

Hugh rose up, and laying his pipe upon the window sill, listened with a face that was suddenly overshadowed. The footstep was soft and catlike, and as swift and sure. It came straight to his room, and an unceremonious hand thrust open the door.

Tommy Dray was one of those men whose faces are real indexes to their feelings, and when he beheld a tall, swarthy gipsy woman of two or three and twenty, with the large and most brilliant and terrible eyes he had ever seen enter the room with the swing and grace of a lioness, the profoundest astonishment and dismay were depicted upon his ordinarily cheerful countenance.

On Hugh Egerton this unexpected apparition had a different effect. His brow grew dark as night and he bit his lips angrily and nervously as the woman advanced and stood before him in an attitude that would have won the heart of Phillip, the painter.

"You here again?" he said, curtly.

"I only do his bidding, master," said the woman. "He says to me, 'Go here and there,' and I obey. Is it not right?"

"I suppose so," said Hugh, more gently. "Perhaps I ought to be kinder to you when you come, seeing that you are numbered among the few faithful women. You would die for him, I suppose?"

"Let him point to a blazing furnace," said the woman, with a meaning look at Hugh, "and tell me to walk into it and see what I will do."

"And, being here, what do you want?" asked Hugh—Don't go, Dray; I have nothing to hide from you."

"You are too good," murmured Tommy, as he sank into his chair again. He was in a semi-dazed state and hardly knew whether he was awake or dreaming.

The woman fixed her terrible eyes—terrible on account of their wondrous beauty—upon him and laughed grimly.

"It would not be difficult to tell your fortune," she said. "Shall I tell it?"

"Let him alone," said Hugh.

"In this matter I must have my way," she said, resolutely. "Come, master, cross my hand with a bit of gold and hold out your palm."

"I tell you," said Hugh, interposing, "that my friend is not to be bothered with your balderdash."

"Balderdash you call it!" she answered. "Come, master, give me the bit of gold. Hear your fortune, and if I don't hit the mark, take your money again."

"That's fair enough," murmured Tommy, utterly spell-bound and fascinated by the handsome gipsy.

Hugh, with an impatient grunt, drew aside, and Tommy put a couple of sovereigns into her hand. The sight of so liberal a donation made her eyes more vivid in their light, so that Tommy Dray could not look at them.

"What would she be like if she were ANGRY," he thought.

"A kind heart and a generous hand," she said, looking into his palm. "A careless way of giving, and often doing mischief when good was intended. A man who suffers for others, having no troubles of his own."

"Something near the mark," murmured Tommy, "but is this the usual sort of thing? I thought you gipsies talked about sweethearts and wives and husbands."

"The woman for you to marry is not born yet," she answered. "You will love in fun and live and die a good-natured fool."

"Your candour alone is worth a sovereign," said Hugh. "Have you done?"

"With him," she said, "and now I can talk to you. You must come to the camp to-night."

"I cannot come," he said.

"You must, and with me," she replied, imperiously. "The camp is at Esher. It is not far. If your appointment is with your friend his good nature will release you."

"Convey my apologies to Lady Ardinlaun," said Hugh, in a low tone, "and say that I have been unexpectedly called away on important

family affairs. On what you have seen I am sure it is not necessary to caution you to be silent?"

"Of course not," said Tommy, "but I—I—can't I help you in any way?"

"In no way, my good fellow," said Hugh, sadly. "Now go, and you need not take leave of her, as she knows nothing of the formalities of our life. She is accustomed to people coming and going without a word."

Tommy shook hands with him and went out, passing the woman, who as far as her looks were concerned appeared to have forgotten him already. Poor Tommy was quite overcome with amazement and the cloud of mystery in which he had been so suddenly enveloped. With a mind confused he went and dined alone, then went to a theatre and sat there thinking of that woman's big, black eyes and Hugh's poverty until the play was over. Then, forgetful of the message he was charged to deliver, went back to his hotel and lay in bed half the night haunted by the events of the day.

It was after two o'clock when Sir Charles Friarly and his wife were set down at their door, after an hour at the ball where they were expected. They had ridden home in silence, and they walked upstairs in silence. On the landing they parted—still in silence—and Sir Charles went to his room, which lay on the right. He had chosen it as being the farthest from that occupied by Lady Friarly.

She stood still until he had disappeared, then suddenly and swiftly following him, entering the room before he had time to carry out the contemplated act of locking the door.

"Pardon me," he said, coldly. "I have some letters to write and want an hour alone."

"You wish to drive me mad," she said; "first you insult me with your indifference, and then you seek to madden me with your silence."

"Again," he said, raising his eyebrows, "will you never learn reason?"

"What have you been doing to-night?" she asked.

"Making an effort to forget that I bound to a maniac," he replied.

"Oh, Charles, be kind to me," she said, suddenly softening, as was her wont, "you know my love for you, and how I love you in my heart. Why is it that you are ice?"

"I would be warmer if my nature permitted it," he replied.

"This false," she said, changing to anger again. "You are no sluggish man, but can be torrid in your passions when you will. Could I not see half-smothered fires in your breast when you were talking to me?"

"I have talked to many to-night. Whom do you mean?"

"You know I refer to Lady Pearl."

"Come, come, Mildred, be reasonable. If I killed half an hour with the great beauty you did not allow the time to be heavy on your hands. You kept Raidenstone by you, a cavalier of whom many women would be proud."

"He is no cavalier of mine."

"I have only your word for that, Mildred."

"And will you not take it?"

"If you will take mine. You see that you play with a two-edged sword. It cuts both ways. But I am still for peace. This life of incessant bickering is growing wearisome."

"And, oh, how weary to me," she wailed.

"Let it end then. Say, shall we go down to Gaunt House?"

"To that lone place?"

"You want me to yourself and you shall have me," he replied. "I can write to-night for it to be prepared for us. We have visited it but once since we were married, and you were not jealous then."

"Not a creature came near us," she said.

"No," he answered, laughing, gaily, "for with the exception of a few herdsmen's huts there is no habitation within three miles, and nothing beyond a homestead for ten or more."

"But why go there, Charles?" she asked, with the softened light in her eyes.

"To prove to you your jealousy is folly," he replied. "You charge me with my admiration of other women. I say it is but the natural

courtesy that society expects. You bid me live in society and yet live the life of a hermit. I tell you it is impossible; but to prove my love—"

"So often shown by coldness and hard words."

"Which you draw from me by your unreasonable jealousy. To prove my love, I say, I will go with you to Gaunt House and we will spend there another honeymoon."

"Oh, Charles, forgive me."

She put her white arms about his neck and lay her head upon his breast with her lips upturned to his. He bent his head down and gave her a Judas kiss.

She clung to him with a love and tenderness that ought to have softened him had he not been hardened to a purpose that was in his heart. He had thought of it for days, had well matured and arranged it, and the time for action had come.

To her a new life had come, a dream realised, for, like all jealous women, she loved, if at all, deeply. There were no half measures in giving her heart, all was laid down before the man who recked not, cared not how great was the gift.

He had never really loved her. The strong, deep feeling so essential to stand the constant companionship, the wear and tear of married life had never been in him, or how could he have smiled within himself as that beautiful, yearning face lay close to his and thought how easily she could be bent to his will?

"To-morrow, dearest," he said, "we will go from here."

"To-morrow," she whispered.

And then he asked her to leave him to his letters, and with another kiss they parted for the time, she going out of the room with a light step and a lighter heart, the bride again.

"He loves me still, thank Heaven," she murmured. "It is only the hard world around us that made him cold."

The prospect of going down to Gaunt House would not have been a very cheery one to most women, for dearly as husbands and wives may love each other they want a LITTLE change of society. A break in the monotony of happiness is at times desirable. But Lady Friarly was rejoiced at the prospect, for there no rival could come between her and Sir Charles.

And had he not spoken of another honeymoon—a sure proof of his love? Away then with doubts and fears, bury all the jealousies of the past, and let the barque of love be launched again to carry them over an ever-sunlit sea.

While thus she fondly mused and dreamt Sir Charles was writing letters, and one of them was to a Doctor Sabotson, which was short enough to give her in full.

"DEAR SABOTSON,—Lady Friarly is not very well and I am going to take her down to Gaunt House for rest and quiet. As the place is so far away from any medical man will you be good enough to run down with us—or, better still, meet us there the day after to-morrow? The latter arrangement will give you the day to pack and settle for somebody to do duty for you. Don't fail. A change will do you good.

Yours, C. F."

No answer could come to this letter, and Sir Charles did not appear to expect one, for it was not posted until within an hour of his leaving town. The doctor's address was 12, Gray Street, Fitzroy Square. Sir Charles posted the letter himself.

The abrupt departure of the baronet and his wife excited only the attention of the few, as London was very full and the gap they made was small. It is somewhat humiliating to the best and greatest of us to think how like we are to grains of sand on the seashore. The wind of circumstances takes us up and whirled us round a certain circle for a time and finally bears us away so that the place that knew us knows us no more, and we are not missed.

The concourses of atoms that make up the world are very much alike. Those who take the vacant place of the departed have so much in common with them that the gap is well and evenly filled. Poor grains of humanity all,

and yet if we were only wise and could think a little more we might see something of the great destiny before us.

But we will not look ahead. We live so much for the present, for the gratification of the hour, and thus we scheme and scheme to gather fruit that looks so fair to the eyes, but when gathered has only ashes within.

What is all this apropos of? you ask, dear reader. I am thinking of poor Lady Friarly, who went away to find Paradise regained. What she found at Gaunt House must have been something very different to the garden of love, for ere a week was out the news came to town that she was dead!

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

VIBRATIONS IN A MAGNETIC FIELD.—On bringing a powerful magnet near the extremities of a vibrating tuning-fork, the attractive force increases the period of vibration like a supplementary weight attached to one of the arms. In this way (as M. Crova has lately shown in the "Journal de Physique") the well-known figures of Lissajous projected on a screen may be varied at will without touching the tuning-forks. He employs M. Mercadier's electro-diapasons for the purpose. A supplementary electro-magnet is placed between the arms of the tuning-fork, which gives the fundamental sound; and it can be moved by means of a screw in a direction perpendicular to the plane of these. A variety of curious experiments may be made with the apparatus.

TOUGHENED GLASS.—From the results of a large number of experiments it is found that the elasticity of toughened glass is more than double that of ordinary glass, and that toughened sheets bend much more readily than ordinary sheets. Single toughened glass has a resistance 2.5 times, and demi-double toughened glass a resistance 3.1 times that of ordinary double glass. Polished toughened sheets, of thickness varying from 0.008 meter to 0.013 meter, have a resistance 3.67 times as great as that of ordinary sheets of the same thickness, and the resistance of rough toughened sheets is 5.30 times that of ordinary rough sheets.

DISCOVERY OF CHALDEAN TREASURES.—Some interesting discoveries have been made in Lower Chaldea by M. de Sarzec, Vice-Consul of France at Bassorah. He has spent the best part of three years in making researches among the ancient ruins of that province, and has brought to light a large number of objects, including eight very handsome statues, all of which are covered with inscriptions in the old Babylonian characters, and which are supposed to be 3,000 years old. The French Government purposes to buy the whole collection for the Louvre, and the Chambers will be asked to vote a credit of £5,300, which is the price asked by the finder.

A NEW AIR-PUMP.—The Pnéole is the name given to an ingenious pneumatic pump recently invented and described to the Academy of Sciences by M. F. de Romilly. It consists of a closed chamber or cylinder communicating by a side-pipe with the receiver to be exhausted. Into the top and bottom of the chamber two pipes project with their orifices opposite each other. The bottom pipe leads to a cistern, and a jet of water or other liquid is launched through it with considerable velocity by any convenient device, such as M. de Romilly's water-elevator. This jet throws itself into the mouth of the pipe which projects from the roof of the chamber, and as this mouth is wider than the diameter of the jet, the water carries a considerable number of air-bubbles with it from the chamber. Owing to their lightness, these bubbles cannot return again, but must either follow the water which is led by a return pipe back to the cistern, or escape by means of a vent provided for them above the chamber. In this way the air within the chamber is drawn out and the receiver exhausted.



[EXPLAINING THE MYSTERY.]

HER BITTER FOE; OR, A STRUGGLE FOR A HEART.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lost Through Gold," "Strong Temptation,"

&c., &c.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MRS. GREY TELLS A TALE.

I cannot tell how the truth may be,
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

No days of Ethel Devreux's life had ever passed so slowly as those which immediately followed her return to the Court. Her whole existence seemed a blank. She felt incapable of rousing herself to take an interest in anything.

Do not judge her too harshly. Ethel was a charming girl, but up to this time she had been rather a spoiled child of fortune. Ever since she could remember things had gone well with her. She had been the favourite with everyone at school; later on she had been the pride and joy of Lady Jocelyn's heart.

Never once had the girl imagined herself actually living at her rightful home. She had always supposed she should stay on with Maudie until she was married—not that Ethel had counted on matrimony as girls are apt to now, but the countess had always spoken of her wedding as a certainty.

In all Ethel's acquaintance a plain gold ring had followed within a year of a girl's début, and so Miss Devreux could hardly be blamed for anticipating a similar fate.

When she loved Keith Jocelyn she awoke to

a first sense of life's anxieties, but her uneasiness did not last long. Almost as soon as she had begun to doubt her own feelings for him, he made all smooth by asking her to be his wife, so that looking back upon every episode of her life we are not wrong in saying that until she came back to Devreux Court, the fair summer evening we have told of, things had gone very easily with Miss Ethel.

The morning after her return she came downstairs looking tired and ill. There was a strange, weary look upon the fair face, a wonderful unrest in the expression of her violet eyes.

Sir Claude did not notice it. He ate his poached eggs and drank his coffee in supreme indifference to any change in his daughter's face, but Mrs. Grey had suffered too much from a heart trouble herself to be blind to the marks of one upon another.

"You look so tired," she said, gently, to Ethel, when the baronet had retired to his library.

Ethel smiled sadly. She had meant to detest Mrs. Grey, but last night in the twilight she had changed her mind, and felt inclined to cling to her for help and sympathy.

"I am tired," said Miss Devreux, simply, "and it is only half-past nine," looking at her watch.

"That is all. Your papa likes to breakfast early."

"Do you always breakfast so early?"

"Always."

"Don't you hate it?"

"No. I prefer it; it gives me more time."

"Time?" opening her eyes. "Why, Mrs. Grey, I should have thought the difficulty here was to kill time."

"I always find mine pass too quickly."

"What can you find to do?"

"I hardly know how to enumerate all. A quantity of trifles I suppose. They say life is made up of little things."

She went out of the room and left Ethel standing in the recess by the window. When she returned an hour later the girl was there; she did not look as if she had stirred a muscle.

"Mrs. Grey."

Magdalen was sitting at the table, a tray heaped up with rich, late flowers beside her. She was going to arrange them for the drawing-room vases.

"Yes," she answered, pleasantly.

"What can I do? It is not eleven yet. I cannot possibly go to bed for eleven hours. What am I to do with myself?"

The housekeeper felt surprised.

"But what do you generally do?"

"Oh, it is so different in London. We used to go out or have people at home."

"Always?"

"Pretty nearly always. It was a great exception if we were at home alone."

Magdalen looked at her pityingly.

"I am afraid you will find the Court a great change," she said, thoughtfully. "Are you fond of reading?"

"I like novels."

"Music?"

"Oh, I could not play now," with a painful stress upon the now. "It would bring everything back to me so."

"Ah, Mr. Jocelyn is fond of music."

"How could you find that out?"

"I think I have heard so," absently. Then, in another voice, "There are a good many novels in the library, Miss Devreux, if you like to go and choose one."

"But papa's there, and he hates to be interrupted. Will you go for me?"

Mrs. Grey laughed.

"That would never do. I should not know what books you had read. You had better go yourself."

It was probably the first time in her life Ethel Devreux had ventured into her father's sanctum. As she expected, he was seated by the table buried in a book. She began searching the shelves most distant to him, but could find none of her favourite authors. In her desire to be expeditious she dropped a thick volume, which fell to the ground with a heavy thud.

Sir Claude looked round quickly. He was

devoted to his books, and resented any injury to them most rigidly.

"Is that you, Ethel? I wish you would not be so clumsy. What do you want?"

Ethel would gladly have escaped from the room, but it was too terrible to think of her long, weary day unrelieved even by fiction, so she came forward boldly.

"I am not clumsy, papa. I wanted a novel to read, and Mrs. Grey said I should find one here."

"Mrs. Grey! That reminds me of something I wanted to say to you, Ethel. Will you please remember that that lady is a friend of mine, and I am not at all pleased at the way in which you treated her last night at dinner."

"I thought she was the housekeeper."

"She is a lady, Ethel, and it is my wish she should be treated as such. Don't forget."

"Very well. I think I shall like her very much."

Sir Claude softened at that.

"There is one thing more I want to say, Ethel. Has Mr. Jocelyn told you the reason of my objection to your engagement?"

"No," slowly. "He said you did not like him."

"He might at least have been honest and told you the reason. When he left England, Ethel, he was engaged to be married. He went abroad because there were difficulties almost impossible to overcome in his way. These difficulties removed he came home."

Ethel's face had grown as sallow white.

"I don't believe it," she cried passionately. "Keith is engaged to me. I am sure he will never forsake me."

"You don't understand," bluntly. "He has forsaken someone else for your sake; the poor girl who trusted to his honour and has lived all these years in the hope of being his wife. She is the only woman Keith Jocelyn ought to marry."

Ethel felt bewildered.

"I am positive Keith was free," she declared.

"Well, I have warned you, I can do no more. You think me unkind and tyrannical, Ethel, but I am really acting for your good. If the young man loves you he will wait faithfully until you are of age; if his affection will not stand that test I am sparing you from being an unloved wife."

Ethel and her book departed. She never again ventured into the library unless she was sure of her father's absence. She had not a daughter's love for him, but in a fashion she was proud of the stately baronet, who looked a fit descendant of a noble line of ancestry.

Ethel never admitted even to herself that there was the slightest foundation for her father's words, but often when she was alone their recollection haunted her. Often did she vainly wish she had persuaded Keith at all hazards to tell her the secret of his life, the reason of his long exile.

"There was a reason for his going," thought the girl sometimes, when she lay on the sofa in her own sitting-room, her golden hair falling in its natural waves over her white dressing-gown. "The first time I ever saw him almost, when I asked him why he did not come home sooner, he told me it was because he could not. Surely no love affair was the cause of his exile; but, no, I am forgetting, I have one proof; he told me again and again that I was his first love. Now people do not exile themselves from home and friends for a girl's sake unless they have loved her."

Very early in her stay at the Court the question had arisen of her correspondence. She was sitting at her desk one morning writing to Maude Jocelyn, when Sir Claude came in abruptly and looked gravely at his daughter's employment.

"To whom are you writing, Ethel?"

"To Maude Jocelyn."

"Did you not understand?" asked the baronet, a little sternly. "Until you are twenty-one I wish you to hold no communication with any of that family."

"But, papa?"

Sir Claude sat down beside her, and, a most unusual thing for him, kissed her fair white brow.

"I believe you think me very unkind, Ethel."

"I think you terribly unjust. You are sacrificing us both to a mere caprice."

"Gently, Ethel. I have lived a little longer than you and I know the world better."

Ethel pouted.

"You cannot know anything against Keith."

"And yet I trust him more than you do."

"How?"

"If Keith Jocelyn loves you," repeated the baronet, solemnly, "in little more than two years he can claim you for his wife; if his love is only a passing fancy surely you do not wish to bind him to a few words spoken in a moment of passion. I should have thought you too proud for that."

He had touched the right chord now, but still she hesitated.

"I was writing to Maude, not to her brother."

"I have told Lady Jocelyn and her daughter of my wishes; they quite understand them. Some men would act the spy upon you, Ethel, and give orders that no letters addressed to Jocelyn Manor should be posted. I cannot condescend to that. You are a Devreux, and your word is your bond, or ought to be."

"It is," proudly.

"Then promise me that you will hold no communication with the Jocelyns without my knowledge."

Ethel trembled.

"If they were ill?" she faltered. "Lady Jocelyn is not young, and Maude has never been strong in her life."

Sir Claude smiled gravely.

"You evidently think me a monster, Ethel. If either Lady Jocelyn or her daughter were ill of course you could go to them at once."

And so reluctantly Ethel gave the promise.

Now you see a little why it was so dull for her at the Court. She was as utterly cut off from former friends as though she had never known them. Ethel was not of a studious turn of mind. Beyond reading a few novels she rarely opened a book, and so her only diversion during the first month of her separation from Keith was Mrs. Grey's society.

The housekeeper devoted all her leisure time to Ethel. She seemed as if she could never do enough for the fair girl. In reality Magdalen always felt she owed Ethel an atonement for the mere fact of being alive. Though Sir Claude's wishes divided the lovers a still greater barrier—if they had only known it—was her own existence. So in the noblest spirit of self-sacrifice Mrs. Grey gave every moment of her leisure to amuse Ethel.

Looking back upon that time Miss Devreux knew whose hand had smoothed her way and helped the leaden hours to pass more quickly; but even at the moment she recognised Magdalen's kindness and was gratified.

"I can't think why you are so good to me," she said to Mrs. Grey, one afternoon. "I'm sure I never did anything to make you like me. I was horribly rude the first time I saw you, and I have done nothing but worry you with my grumblings ever since."

Magdalen smiled.

"I hated the idea of you," continued Ethel. "Papa did nothing but talk of your virtues all the way from London."

"Sir Claude is very good," calmly.

"You and he must have led such a nice, quiet life before I came."

"We do not lead a very noisy one now."

"Weren't you sorry?"

"I was sorry for the cause."

"Did you have a great deal of trouble before you were allowed to marry Mr. Grey?" asked Ethel, frankly. "Do you know I think you must, you seem to understand it all so well?"

For one instant a crimson blush dyed Magdalen's cheek, then, fading, left her even paler than before.

"We both had a great deal of sorrow," she said, softly. "Our marriage was a very hasty one."

It dawned on Ethel at these words that it had not been a happy one.

"Did you live in London?"

"I lived near London."

"Have you ever seen Keith?"

"Keith?" repeated Magdalen, absently.

"Mr. Jocelyn, I mean. If you lived near London you might have seen him."

"I have heard of him. I fancy all the time I lived near London he was abroad."

"Mrs. Grey," bending her face down, and speaking in a whisper, "did you ever hear what he went abroad for?"

Magdalen hesitated. She wondered how much Keith had told Ethel of his past.

"Rumour is seldom to be believed," she said, after a long silence.

"But did you hear?"

"Don't you think Mr. Jocelyn would prefer to tell you the story himself?"

"He promised he would tell me when we were married," blushing at the words.

"And can't you wait till then?"

"No. Papa is always hinting there was some dreadful reason for Keith's going away. He quite frightens me sometimes. Whatever the truth were, I think I could bear it better."

No one in the whole world was more capable of telling her the whole truth than the woman beside her.

"No one ever told me the story," striving hard to keep to the truth, and yet evade Ethel's suspicions; "you must remember that."

"But you have heard about it?"

"Yes."

"And you will tell me—you must," a little haughtily. "It is my right."

"It was at the time of Lady Hamilton's marriage. He was young then, and a great deal left to his own desires. He was thrown into strange company, and—"

"You don't mean that he gambled?" interrupted Ethel, quickly. "Oh, I can't believe it."

"No," went on Magdalen, speaking as calmly as though she were speaking of some old legend instead of relating her own heart-story. "Oh, no; he was travelling in Scotland with some people, and you know the Scotch marriage laws are not the same as ours, and so—"

"What do you mean?" cried Ethel, impatiently. "Do make haste. What could the Scotch marriage laws have to do with Keith?"

"They say—remember, I am not telling you this as a fact—that without his meaning it or understanding anything about it until it was done he became a married man."

"Keith married?" came from Ethel's white lips. "Impossible! Impossible!"

"So the story goes," went on Mrs. Grey. "He was very angry when he discovered the fraud which had been practised upon him; but no anger could undo the deed. He was married, and as nothing could induce him to present his wife to his family he went abroad and vowed never to return until he was free."

Ethel was crying.

"I think, do you know," she whispered, "the story you heard must be true, it agrees so with words he has let drop at different times."

"You need not cry," said Mrs. Grey, a little coldly; "the wife died this spring. I have been told before you met him he was free."

"I am not crying for myself."

"No?"

"Do you think I can't feel for her, poor thing? She was his wife, and he seems to have hated her. Oh, she must have been a miserable woman."

"I should think so."

"How did you hear it? Who could have told you? I am sure Keith would never speak of it to anyone—quite sure."

"His wife lived near me," said Mrs. Grey, softly. "When she was ill her sister asked me to go and see her—"

"And you knew her? Was she nice?"

"She had suffered much. You have no cause to be jealous of her, Ethel. She was an unloved wife, and death was very welcome to her."

"And this is what papa means?"

"I should think not. I believe—nay, I am sure—that not four people in England know even as much of the truth as I have told you."

That conversation took a load off Ethel's mind. She had always longed, yet dreaded, to hear Keith's secret. The jealous fear had haunted her that it might be a love-story. She believed Mrs. Grey's recital implicitly; a hundred little circumstances, unnoticed at the time, seemed to confirm it.

Ethel was of an intensely jealous disposition, but she had a generous heart as well. She could not be jealous of the dead, especially when she knew that the poor lost one had been wife in name only, and never tasted the happiness of Keith Jocelyn's love.

From that day forward Ethel's spirits rose. She had no living rival in Keith's heart. When she saw a paragraph in a fashionable newspaper announcing Rosalie Norton's betrothal to the Count de Rossi she felt almost happy. Fortunately for her peace of mind she did not see the following number, which contained a short but emphatic denial.

The weeks glided slowly on, and Ethel, trusting in Keith's love, was waiting impatiently for her twenty-first birthday.

CHAPTER XXV.

A COMPACT OF FRIENDSHIP.

If free from passion, which all friendship checks,
And your true feeling known and understood,
No friend like to a woman earth discovers
So that you have not been nor shall be lovers.

SEPTEMBER had come; the golden corn waved in the fields; the excessive heat had passed away; the roses were over, except a few rich, late kinds, and the lovely grounds of Devreux Court had already a faint tinge of autumn added to their summer beauty.

It was mild still, and though the evenings were shorter the light of the soft, silvery moon amply compensated for the sun's retirement and shone upon Ethel Devreux, making her look almost like some fairy sprite as she sat on a low garden chair under a spreading oak.

At her side, one arm resting on her chair, stood John Tremaine, Marquis of Allonby, looking his best in a faultless evening dress.

Jack always appeared to greater advantage out of doors. Ethel, in her soft, white muslin, was almost a doll beside the young Saxon giant, whose eyes were fixed upon her intently. He had come down on a long visit at Sir Claude's invitation, and he was anything but satisfied with the reception accorded him by Sir Claude's daughter.

"You don't seem at all glad to see me, Ethel," discontentedly, picking a flower to pieces.

Ethel opened her large violet eyes scornfully.

"You are papa's visitor, not mine."

"Would you rather I had stayed away?" demanded Jack. "Because the mistake is easily set right. I can tell Sir Claude I have important business and go up by the first train to-morrow."

"But you HAVEN'T important business?"

"That doesn't matter. I can't stop here if you are going to treat me like this."

"Like what?"

"Look here, Ethel, I can't bandy words. You're so awfully clever I'm no match for you, but we've been friends ever since you were as high as that," and he put his hand upon the back of her chair as a measurement.

"And we've been separated for ten years of the friendship. Don't forget that, Jack."

"Well, you were as nice as anything in London, and here you'll hardly give me a civil word."

"I'm sorry, Jack," touched by his earnest face, "only you see I didn't feel quite sure why you had come here."

"Why I came here?" greatly mystified. "Why I came here because your father asked me."

It was an awkward position. She could hardly ask him if he came as her lover, and upon the answer to that question depended her whole future treatment of him.

"Have you seen the Jocelyns lately, Jack?"

"Not often. I expect you know more about them than I do."

"I have never heard from them since I left. Papa won't let me write to them. Oh, Jack, it's very hard."

Jack whistled.

"It's true then, Ethel?"

"What?"

"That you were engaged to Keith Jocelyn, and Sir Claude put a stop to it."

"I AM engaged to Keith," corrected the girl, firmly. "We are going to wait until I'm of age."

"I think I understand," said Jack, shyly, taking her little hand in his huge ones. "Your father won't let you marry Jocelyn, and you're afraid some other fellow might try and tempt you to forget him. That's why you've been so unkind to me."

"Yes," remorsefully. "Oh, Jack, don't think me very horrid, but I fancied you liked me."

Poor Jack! He cleared his throat before he could answer.

"I never only liked you, Ethel. It was my dearest wish to marry you. But, dear, I'm not the man to try and break another fellow's heart, nor are you the girl to do it. If you and Jocelyn are going to wait for each other I must forget all that I had hoped for."

"Do," urged Ethel. "Oh, Jack, let's go back to the old times when we were children and had no thoughts of marrying anyone. I used to call you my brother then. Be a brother to me now and help me to wait patiently."

"I will."

It cost him a great deal to make the promise, but he was a brave young fellow and came of a noble stock. He had cared for Ethel as for no other woman, but he was too true to attempt to rob Keith Jocelyn of his betrothed.

There was nothing false or treacherous in Jack's nature, from that moment he decided to be as true to Ethel as the brother she had called him and before all else to study her happiness. These two were sworn friends for all time, but lovers never more.

"And I may stay at the Court?"

"I hope you will stay ever so long, it is so nice to have you. And, oh, Jack, dear, do try and like someone else. There are plenty of girls in the world, heaps nicer than I am, if you would only think so."

"I never met one," avowed Jack, staunchly.

"It's your bad taste."

"Ethel," said Jack, in another tone, "how beautiful the Court looks to-night. I often wonder your father can bear to think of its going to a distant cousin."

"He can't bear it," admitted Ethel, "but how is it to be prevented? That is one of the reasons papa cares so little for me because I am a girl and cannot inherit Devreux Court."

"Do you know whom it will go to?"

"I don't know. Some hateful cousin we have never seen, I suppose."

"Don't be angry. I only learnt it myself last week. If anything happens to Sir Claude the Court will come to me."

"But you're not a Devreux."

"There's not a living Devreux now. I descend on my father's side from the Devreuxes. It is through my mother that I came in for Allonby."

"You must be awfully rich, Jack."

Jack pulled his moustache.

"I don't know that I'm any happier than when I was the family poor relation, Ethel."

"But you will be," said Ethel, positively.

"Perhaps."

Lord Allonby was certainly not in his usual spirits.

"I think when I leave here I shall go abroad," said the marquis, slowly. "I hate the country in winter, and I'm sick of London."

"You're hard to please."

"I don't think I was made to live alone."

"No one is."

"Sir Claude used to make a pretty good attempt at it. How altered he is, Ethel."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes."

"I have noticed it myself, but I hardly understand in what the difference lies."

"He used to have no thought for anything outside the library. Now he is quite conversational."

"It is Mrs. Grey's doings."

"Phew!"

"What does 'phew' mean?"

"Has it ever struck you, Ethel, that your father is not at all what you would call a very old man?"

"No. I never thought about it. What are you going to say, Jack?"

"Only that you ought not to be surprised if he married again."

"Married again? Papa? Are you in your senses, Jack?" laughing aloud.

"There's nothing unnatural in it if you'd only think, Ethel. And it would be the only way of keeping the estate in the family."

Ethel shook her head sadly.

"My mother has been dead nearly eighteen years. Surely if papa meant to have given her a successor he would have done it before."

"Before, he was buried in his books."

"Poor papa," jestingly. "You have determined to marry him to someone. Pray have you selected my future step-mother?"

"I should think you could guess that."

"Indeed I can't."

"Have you never noticed the interest he takes in Mrs. Grey?"

"Mrs. Grey!" opening her eyes in amazement.

"And why not? She is a lady in all the essential things. I'm not clever, Ethel, but I can see that."

"She is a lady, and I am very fond of her," admitted Ethel, "but I think you are wrong."

"It would do very well," concluded the marquis. "She is a charming hostess. The only person who might have a claim to object would be you, Ethel, and as you are going to be married yourself—"

"Some day."

"Well, some day then, it wouldn't make much difference to you."

The cousins sat on for some time talking pleasantly together. Jack Tremaine had never in so many words asked Ethel to be his wife, and so there was none of the embarrassment of a rejected lover in his position. They both seemed to have forgotten their meeting in London, and to be drifting back into the free, careless intercourse of their childhood.

But Jack's words lingered in Ethel's mind. She was very fond of Mrs. Grey. Not remembering her own mother, and bearing no very absorbing love to her father, his second marriage would not have excited her annoyance or indignation, but she could not fancy Mrs. Grey ever taking a second husband.

To Ethel's fancy those long, soft, black dresses, that sweet, wistful smile were part and parcel of the widow's self. To picture her in colours, to imagine her a bride, seemed utterly impossible.

When they entered the house they found tea waiting for them in the drawing-room, and Jolliffe hovering about.

"Mrs. Grey has gone to bed with a headache," he said, respectfully, to Ethel. "And Sir Claude has taken tea in the library."

"I hope Mrs. Grey is not very ill. She never complained at dinner."

"She is not given to complaining, miss," with dignity. "She never spares herself, never."

"It is a strange thing," said Ethel to the marquis, as they took their tea, "I always thought servants disliked anyone who had the management of a house, but everyone here worships Mrs. Grey."

"I like her face," said Jack, simply. "It's good."

That same evening as she went up to bed a sudden impulse made Ethel knock at the housekeeper's door. No voice answered, but the door was not locked, and feeling more anxious than she could have thought possible, Ethel turned the handle and went in.

Joliffe was mistaken. Mrs. Grey had not gone to bed. She was sitting wrapped in a white dressing-gown by a little table with something in her hand. Ethel fancied it was a photograph, but she had no time to make certain, for at the sound of her approach Mrs. Grey turned it upon its face and advanced to meet her.

"I knocked twice," said Ethel, a little awkwardly, "but you did not answer, and I fancied you might be ill. Joliffe said your head was bad."

Mrs. Grey shook back the masses of her lovely hair, which fell far below her waist, and put up one thin hand to her delicate brow.

"It was very bad, but it is better now."

Ethel looked into the clear, limpid eyes and saw that they were wet with tears.

"You have been crying," she said, simply.

"Mrs. Grey, you should not come up here alone to brood over your troubles; you ought to tell them to me and let me try to comfort you as you do me."

The housekeeper trembled violently.

"Nothing could comfort me, dear."

"Is it his death that makes you unhappy?"

Mrs. Grey evidently did not understand.

"Whose death?"

"Mr. Grey's," timidly.

"No," answered Magdalen, truthfully. "I am more selfish; I am crying for myself."

Ethel kissed her.

"Dear," said the young girl, tenderly, "such a strange thought has come to me to-night about you. At first I did not like it, but when I went on thinking about it I found it was just the best thing in the world."

"What can you mean?"

"You are all alone in the world, aren't you?"

"Quite alone."

"And you like being here?"

"Yes."

"Well," softly, putting her cheek to Mrs. Grey's, "I think papa likes you. He never seems so happy as when he is talking to you, and if only you would let him make you Lady Devreux I think you would not feel so sad."

Magdalen shook like an aspen leaf.

"Indeed—indeed, Ethel, I hope you are mistaken. Sir Claude has been so kind to me."

"So kind that he wishes to be kinder."

"Oh, I hope not!"

"Think well of it," said Ethel, gently. "Remember my father would take such care of you, and though he does not love me I think he would be all tenderness to a wife. You must not think I should worry you; you know, I shall marry Keith before so very long."

Magdalen threw her arms round Ethel's neck and kissed her.

"My dear child," she said, "I shall never forget your kindness, never; but you must not think of such a thing. I am quite sure Sir Claude would not wish what you have suggested—ah! I am positive."

"But if he did?" persisted Ethel.

"Then, dear, I should have to leave this happy, easeful home and wander about the world. I can never marry again, Ethel."

"How you must have loved Mr. Grey!"

"It is not only that," truthfully; "there is a reason why I must never think of joining my lot to another's. Ethel, will it sadden you? I think you like me just a little, child."

"I love you dearly," answered Ethel; "but tell me your secret, I will keep it faithfully."

"Only, dear, that my pilgrimage is nearly over. It has been a long and toilsome one. Many a time I have longed to be at rest, and now I am to have my wish."

"What can you mean? You are not ill?"

"Before you came your papa thought I looked ailing and he sent Dr. Moreton to see me. He is a kind man, Ethel; I think he guessed the truth the first time he saw me. When I knew him better I told him my one wish was to keep it a secret and stay on at my post. I loved Devreux

Court, and I thought you would miss me a little, and he has granted my wish generously."

"But can nothing be done?"

"Nothing."

Ethel burst into a passion of weeping.

"You must not cry," said Mrs. Grey. "There is nothing to sadden you in my illness, and one thing I promise you, when I feel the end near, I will go away. My death shall not cast a shadow over the Court."

"Oh! how can you talk so! Promise me rather to stay here and let me do all I can to ease your pain?"

"It would be very sweet," said Magdalen, wistfully.

"And you will let me have my way?"

"Yes."

Ethel lingered. She could not bear to leave her friend.

"I wonder why everyone likes you so? Even the servants worship you. Jack says it is because you are so good."

Mrs. Grey smiled.

"Lord Allonby does not know me. I am far from good; one sin will haunt me to my dying day."

"I think you magnify it," said Ethel, affectionately. "You must be good or people would not love you so."

"And yet, Ethel, the only love I craved was withheld from me; the one heart I longed for was always steeled against me, always," she repeated, sadly.

After that evening things went on pretty tranquilly at the Court. Jack lingered, more than ever Ethel's friend and helping to make the old place cheerful and homelike. The baronet did not relapse into his studious habits, and his housekeeper was ever at her post.

Ethel Devreux made a private call one morning on Dr. Moreton. He was astonished at the agony in her voice as she asked him if it was true, if nothing could save Mrs. Grey.

"Nothing in this world, Miss Devreux. She may linger weeks; she may die at any moment. It is only a question of time."

"You will never send her away from us?"

"Never, unless you wish it. But will not a death at the Court sadden your home?"

Ethel looked at him with flashing eyes.

"We Devreuxes do not forsake our friends. Mrs. Grey shall never leave the Court until she insists upon it."

"She is a wonderful woman."

"Why," simply, "I love her, but you, whose so many faces, how can you know all she is?"

"I am not blind if I am a doctor. Mrs. Grey is dying of a broken heart; some crushing blow has blighted her whole being. It has taken years to do the work, but it is killing her surely now."

"Sorrow does kill then?"

"Sometimes."

"It must have been Mr. Grey's death."

"Perhaps."

But he doubted it.

From that day Ethel never tried to blind herself to the fact that very soon she would have to resign her friend. She and Jack—who would have done anything for anyone Ethel loved—spent many an hour in smoothing Mrs. Grey's pathway to the grave.

The Marquis of Allonby showed no intention of hurrying away from the Court; he was still there in the end of October. Judge of his astonishment at seeing the following announcement in the "Times":

"On the 29th inst., by special licence, at Devreux Court, the most noble the Marquis of Allonby, to Ethel, only child of Sir Claude Devreux, Baronet."

"A horrible practical joke!" muttered Jack, beneath his moustache. "Ethel and I are only friends, but will Keith Jocelyn believe it if he sees this?"

(To be Continued.)

SINCE it has been stated that the visit to England of King Kalakua has been undertaken

in order to induce, if possible, an infusion of foreign blood into the decreasing population of his own country, it is well to bear in mind the warning that the French have a leper hospital in Paris for the special use of missionaries and seamen from the Sandwich Islands, and a frightful place it is, more hideous than the Morgue. The pathetic story of the French Admiral may be remembered, who returned from these islands a few years ago with leprosy. He consulted all the physicians in Paris, and, finding his case hopeless, blew his brains out and put an end to his life at once. His widow is still an inmate of the retreat; but too hideous to be seen by her friends. A sufficient infusion of fresh blood in the race might put an end to this disease; but who will willingly face this awful disease as long as it is possible to live in Europe, or as long as there is another unoccupied spot in the world?

AN IMPERIAL ARTIZAN.

IN the Cabinet of Curiosities at the National Museum of St. Petersburg, Russia, is a bar of iron—a plain-looking, ugly, dingy, hammered mass of metal—which attracts about as many of the visitors as anything there exposed. Only a bar of common iron, weighing thirty-six pounds avoirdupois, and yet it would require a big fortune to buy it. But it has a story:

While Peter the Great was on the throne of Russia, during one of his intensely practical fits, he made his way, with a number of his court, to the celebrated forges of Muller, at Istra, where he remained a month, giving himself to the work of learning the mysteries of the trade. At the end of the month he took a forge, stripped himself for the work, caused his own attendants—members of his court—to blow the bellows, attend to the fire, and bring coals; and thus, with his own hands, he forged out eighteen pounds of iron, and put his own personal mark on each one. (A pound is a Russian weight of 36 lbs.)

When Peter had finished his work, he called the proprietor, and exhibited the specimens of his skill, and they were found to be good—"good enough for anybody," the superintendent said.

"Then," said Peter, "what can you pay me for what do you pay your workmen for just such work?"

The master informed him, but wished to pay him much more.

"For," said he, "that iron which you have put your own mark, is worth more to me than other iron."

"That is nothing to me," persisted Peter. "According to your prices to your workmen I have earned eighteen altinas. That sum will just purchase for me a pair of shoes, of which I am much in need."

So the great Czar received his eighteen altinas, and purchased a pair of shoes, and those shoes he exhibited with intense satisfaction.

"They are mine," he would say, "for I earned them by the sweat of my brow."

It is one of those pounds, forged by Peter, at Istra, now on exhibition in the cabinet at St. Petersburg.

A WONDERFUL MONKEY.

THE "Mahratta," a native Indian journal, relates the following story from Indore: A certain Hindoo watchmaker, residing on the bank of the Khan River, just behind Pandhurnath's temple in Kurai Ghat Street, accidentally met his death, and as he had no close relatives to perform the funeral ceremonies, the police authorities went to the house, took charge of his property, and also of a big monkey kept by him. This animal was tamed by the deceased,

who took a fatherly care of his pet. When the monkey saw this sad accident he at once came to him, kissed his feet and mouth, and cried so loud as no human being could cry. His red eyes and the overflowing tears proved to every beholder his agony for his master; he was perplexed in his grief, and became so wild that he at once jumped on the nearest house and purposely threw himself on a large stone which was lying beneath it to commit suicide. The throng of spectators, who naturally held a compassionate view, gave him some fruits to eat, so that he might calm himself, but the sagacious animal threw all the fruits in the faces of the givers, showing every beholder that he was, as it were, insulted. Nobody dared to go to the deceased and take him to the burying-ground; the police were frightened, and went to fetch more men.

On the other side the monkey was crying; he fell on his master's feet and kissed them. Sometimes he took stones and beat himself; sometimes he went to the nearest large stone and dashed his head so heavily against it that it seemed as though it must be fractured; sometimes he tore his hair. He now and then went to the deceased, and by lifting his hand he saw whether the pulse of his master was beating. Words fail to describe the agony of this poor animal. There was not a single soul whose heart was not melted. After three hours, when the order arrived from the nearest magistrate to remove the corpse at once, one of the policemen went to catch the animal, but the instant he reached the place the monkey attacked him desperately, and would have killed him had not the policeman taken proper precaution to save himself. Afterward, some four or five men volunteered their services, and suddenly caught the animal and fastened him with a chain to the nearest wooden post, and took the corpse away. When the poor animal saw his master being removed, he bade him his last farewell, and fell to the ground unconscious.

After the funeral the policeman who had removed his master took all the property and the animal to the jail ward. Now it is told that the monkey does not wish to behold the four men who took his master away, and up to date he has not eaten a morsel of food, and has been crying day and night. When he sleeps in the night it has been noticed that he wakes from his slumber and looks out in every direction with a joyful eye, thinking he has heard his master call.

soft, green grass, and reminded him sadly enough of the night three years before when Eleanor had led him along that same path to his ruin.

He paused by the gate and thought the whole scene over.

"Did she know it? Did she know he was married?" he murmured, thinking of Eleanor. "No, she could not have been so deliberately wicked as that; no, I must continue, I must still try to believe that she spoke what she thought to be the truth."

And then he opened the gate and walked for a while noiselessly up and down amidst the shadows of the apple trees.

The clock in the distant church chimed eleven, and a wild desire took possession of Dennis. He must see Hilda once more. Silently he stole along and opened the little gate that led into the garden, and half hidden in the shadow of the yew hedge, reached the seat on the terrace where Hilda was used in bygone days to sit watching for his coming.

All was quiet; the inhabitants of the farm had retired to rest. At one window only was there a light visible, and in a moment he knew it was the light in Hilda's chamber. She had not yet retired to rest; he might yet see her.

Cautiously he advanced, keeping his eyes fixed on the illuminated casement, and then a shadow—her shadow fell for a moment on the white blind, the light was extinguished, and all was dark.

He fell on his knees on the grass. He knew now he had seen the very last of her, that days and months and years might pass, but that his eyes would behold that form never again, and the tear drops fell thick and fast as he gazed on the now darkened window and prayed God to bless and keep and comfort his lost darling.

As he crossed the terrace he beheld a glittering something on which the moonbeams sparkled and played, lying on the grass at the foot of a large moss-rose bush. He stooped and picked it up; it was a garden knife which long ago he had given Hilda, and her initials "H. R." were engraved on a tiny silver plate on the hilt. Beside it lay a basket half filled with rose cuttings and a little garden hat.

For a moment he took it up and pressed the ribbons to his lips. It was hers; perhaps that day she had worn it. Then almost reverently he laid it on the grass again and took up the little basket and held it tenderly for awhile in his hands. Then he took the knife and severed a knot of ribbon from the hat and placed it in his bosom, hesitated a moment, and then turned away, and with a last long look at the window and at Ray Farm left the garden, Hilda's knife still in his hand.

As he neared the cottage he shut it up carefully and put it into his breast pocket, along with the knot of blue ribbon, and with a sigh turned for the last time and gazed down the moonlit lane, lifted the latch of the garden gate, and in a minute more stood in Eleanor's presence in the cottage parlour.

"How late you are, Dennis!" she said, sharply. "Do you know it's half-past eleven and more, and you are to start for town at seven o'clock?"

"Yes, I know," replied Dennis, wearily, sinking into a chair. "Don't sit up for me, Eleanor. Forget! Is it likely I should forget the journey that I am to begin to-morrow?" and he leant his head on his hands and gazed gloomily before him.

"The journey was of your own choosing," replied Eleanor, coldly. "I don't see why you should begin to complain about it just at the last."

"I don't complain," replied Dennis. "I said only that I had not forgotten what lay before me. Eleanor, perhaps this is the last night we may ever pass together—answer me one question truly."

"What question?" returned Eleanor, harshly.

"A question I have asked you before, but which you may not have liked to answer truly. Now that we are parting, most likely for ever, tell me truly if you knew when I married you that—"

"What?" cried Eleanor. "We are on the

verge of parting, perhaps—though why it should be so I hardly know—for ever, and yet your head is full of Hilda Ray, for of course by your way of beginning I can tell it is of that estimable and much injured young woman you are about to speak. If I have answered your question before what is the use of asking it me again, Dennis?"

"Yet I will ask you again, Eleanor—did you know that night that Gerald Ray was married?"

Eleanor turned on him furiously.

"I have answered your question, not once, but twenty times. I'm sick of being cross-questioned by you. I tell you I knew no more about it than you did."

"Nor when you married me?" he asked.

"No, nor when I married you," she replied, scornfully.

"Swear it," he said, sternly.

"I swear it," she replied, turning pale as he gazed at her with his melancholy, piercing eyes.

"Why do you look at me so, Dennis?"

"To see if you speak truth, Eleanor," he answered, removing his eyes from her face.

"There, go away to bed. I'm sorry to have kept you up so late."

"Where have you been?" she asked, looking at him suspiciously. "To meet Miss Ray again?"

"No; I have not seen Miss Ray," he answered, darkly. "Go to bed, Eleanor. Don't let's quarrel the last night of my sojourn in England. Hilda Ray and I will never meet again."

And Eleanor left him sitting in the cottage parlour, and when she opened her eyes the next morning they fell on his face bending over her as he roused her to bid her farewell.

"God bless you, Eleanor," he said, kissing her. "I have made you a sorry sort of husband, I fear; we have a good deal to forgive each other; but perhaps if we meet again we shall be better friends and live together more happily than we have hitherto done. Good bye, my dear."

And with another kiss he turned away and left her.

For a moment a pang of remorse passed through Eleanor's soul. She jumped up and called after him to come back, to speak one more word to her, but she was too late. The wheels of the departing dog-cart fell on her ear, and rushing to the window she saw him turning the corner, and in an instant more he was hidden from her gaze. She was alone.

For a moment she felt softened, almost sad, and a tear dimmed her eye.

"I wonder shall I ever see him again?" she thought. "He's not such a bad fellow, and perhaps if I had cared for him he might have got to love me, or at any rate to like me enough to have got on comfortably with me, but I didn't love him. I tried once, but I couldn't, and he still loves Hilda, I know. As for me, I'm not sure if I have the faculty of loving. I believe I did love Gerald Ray. Yes! yes! even now I love him, as much as I can love anyone. Well, we've made a sad muddle of our lives, Dennis and I, and I haven't done much good for myself by taking him away from Hilda, poor wretch! Let us hope he will make a fortune and come home soon, and then we might buy back Stonevale, or, far better, set up house in London, only Dennis is sure to say it's too expensive, and now, I suppose, he'll be more particular than ever. Psha! what a fool I am, counting my chickens before they are hatched in this way. Perhaps Dennis may come back poorer than he went; who knows? I'm glad I managed to save some of my jewels, though."

And she crept out of bed, and from a private cupboard in the wall she took a little worn jewel-case, and from it a variety of jewellery she had secreted and saved from being sold with the rest of the property at Stonevale, and whilst trying them on and brightening and refurbishing them up, Dennis and his future were soon forgotten, and then, it being still early, she put her jewels away again in their hiding-place and, turning round on her pillow, composed herself to sleep again.

TRUE TILL DEATH;

OR,

A FAILURE OF JUSTICE.

CHAPTER XIV.

Though wisdom wakes, suspicion sleeps
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems.

It was Wednesday night; early on Thursday Dennis was to leave Hartford for London, and that same evening would see him on board ship and bound for a voyage to new lands.

He had passed the day in finishing his preparations for his journey, and in bidding adieu to many an old friend whom he had known from the days of his childhood, and when evening came and he saw the sun set for the last time over his native place a deep depression settled on him, a feeling of coming ill he tried in vain to shake off, and which as night closed in grew stronger and stronger.

He wandered out of the cottage and along the deep lanes until in the distance the gables and tall chimneys of Ray Farm became visible, and mechanically he took the path that leads across the fields to the gate of the orchard, where he had so often walked on summer evenings with Hilda. The moon was up and the shadows of the apple trees formed a checkered shade on the

"It's no use to get up yet awhile," she thought. "I haven't got to attend to grandmamma now, thank goodness, and as she's bedridden now, I shall have all the house to myself, and shan't be disturbed by her. I shall have to go and see her every day, I suppose. It would not do to let her fancy I neglected her, for I mean her to leave me all her money—to leave it to me, I mean, not to Dennis. She won't last much longer now; it's impossible, she gets so feeble; and when she dies I shall be pretty well off. Dear me, how tired I am."

And so saying, Eleanor Vanstone closed her eyes and was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER XV.

Who should be trusted now when one's right hand
Is perjur'd to the bosom?

By noon that day Dennis Vanstone was far on his road to London, the green fields and shady lanes, the breezy downs and rocky coast of D—shire far behind him, and evening saw him driving down to the docks, where lay the *Bertha*, bound for Sidney, in which his passage had been taken.

The decks were crowded with passengers when he walked across the gangway into the vessel, heaps of luggage lay here and there, piles of merchandise on this side, stores of live stock on that.

Confusion indescribable reigned throughout the ship, and Dennis, when he at length discovered his cabin, was glad to retire to it and remain in it till the hubbub and bustle had a little subsided.

By ten or eleven o'clock something like order and quiet were re-established, the cries of the children had ceased, they had sunk to rest in their unaccustomed beds, and their parents, wearied out by the day's toil and excitement, slept too.

The luggage had all come on board and been stowed away in the hold, and when Dennis went up on deck he found everything trim and ship-shape, for they were to drop down with the tide that night, and ere daybreak would be at the river's mouth, and soon after out to sea and their long voyage begun.

Dennis sat by the wheel watching the preparations for the start with a sad heart. He felt terribly lonely and dejected, as if life and its troubles were too hard for him, and the struggle for existence hardly worth the effort it cost, and he almost regretted that he had undertaken the voyage instead of sitting down idly with his hands before him in his native land and trusting to fortune to set his affairs right again.

Next day the *Bertha* was sailing with a fair wind down Channel, and the white cliffs and green hills of England were dimly to be seen in the horizon. The sea was rough, and most of the passengers kept their cabins, the demon of sea-sickness having taken possession of them, so that Dennis, who was one of the few over whom the enemy had no power, found the decks deserted except by the crew and the saloon almost untenanted, and he was at liberty to dream away the time at his pleasure without interruption.

On the third evening of the voyage, as they were running rapidly down Channel, Dennis was seated on deck watching with straining eyes the hazy coast-line.

They were off D—shire now, and nearer to the dear old home than he might ever be again, and as the familiar light of Hartwell Point came in view his heart swelled within him and he breathed a prayer for the dear one who lay perhaps buried in slumber not ten miles from where the lighthouse raised itself above the treacherous reef at the foot of the headland.

As he stood silently leaning on the bulwarks, he caught sight of another figure, who regarded the distant light with eyes almost as wistful as his own. He was a sailor, Dennis saw at a glance, and the figure seemed strangely familiar to him, though the face, bronzed by exposure to

wind and weather, and covered by a thick beard of golden brown, was unknown to him.

"That is the light off Hartwell Point, is it not?" asked Dennis.

"Yes, sir," replied the sailor, who Dennis imagined to be one of the mates of the *Bertha*, regarding him curiously for a moment.

The sound of the man's voice sent a curious thrill through Dennis's frame, and he almost trembled as he remarked, by way of continuing the conversation:

"I know D—shire well, and the Point there too."

"Indeed!" replied the cheery voice of the sailor; "it is my county too, though it is three years and more since I was last there."

"Three years!" said Dennis, his heart beating fast. "Three years! What part of D—shire do you come from?"

"Hartford," replied he; "not so far from the Point there."

And he waved his hand in the direction of the light.

Dennis Vanstone was silent a moment, then, in a faltering voice, he said:

"Gerald Ray, don't you know me?"

The man started violently.

"Who speaks?" said he, coming nearer and looking into Dennis's face. "Dennis Vanstone—what, you here? My God! What has happened?"

And Gerald Ray (for he it was) waited breathlessly for him to speak.

"What has happened? I am ruined, Gerald, and am on my way to Australia to try my luck," he replied.

"And Hilda—how is she? Ah! perhaps I ought not to speak to you of Hilda" (and he drew back coldly). "Is your wife on board?"

Dennis laughed bitterly.

"My wife prefers England to a new country, and is at Hartford still. Hilda is well, Gerald; I saw her not a week ago."

And his sad, despairing tones told Gerald more plainly than words could have told him that Dennis's heart was full of remorse for his treatment of Hilda, and that in some way or other he had been betrayed into his marriage with Eleanor.

For a moment or two there was silence between them, and then Gerald said, in a low, agitated voice:

"You loved Hilda once, Dennis. In Heaven's name, what made you treat her as you did? I have known you all my life; it has been a hard puzzle to me to understand your conduct. Tell me what made you act towards her as you did and marry a girl who—"

And he turned aside for a moment to hide his agitation, leaving his sentence unfinished.

"What made me do it? My mad, groundless jealousy," groaned Dennis.

"Jealousy!" cried Gerald. "You were jealous of a girl like Hilda—the soul of truth and purity? You were jealous! But of who?"

"Of you, Gerald," he replied.

"Of me! Good Heaven!" cried Gerald. "Of me! Why, I never looked on Hilda as anything but a dear sister."

"I believe it; I know it now. But I saw you together in the orchard that night, and for a while I was mad with jealousy. People had spread stories of you and Hilda, said it was on her account Daniel Ray had turned you out of his house, and—"

"The liars!" cried Gerald, hotly. "Why, it was about my wife—about Maggie Donovan we fell out. I had been married a year and more the night you saw us together. I had told her my history, and we were waiting for your arrival to tell it to you, but you never came. Oh! my poor cousin, is it I who have spoiled your life and brought all this grief on you?"

And Gerald hid his face in his hands.

"Who led you to the orchard gate, Dennis?" he presently asked, in a stern voice—"tell me!"

Dennis was silent.

"I have a strong suspicion who it was," he continued, in the same tone, "and who it was who set the tales afloat, you speak of. It was your wife who told you I was with Hilda and put doubts and jealousies into your heart."

Forgive me for naming her, Vanstone, but—but you have been deceived."

"Deceived—yes, or have been allowed to deceive myself—you are right; it was, Eleanor, my wife, who told me these tales," replied Dennis.

"Yet she knew I was married," said Gerald, in a low, bitter tone.

"Nay, let us do her justice, Gerald; she did not know that—she does not know that now. Report in D—shire says you are married, but till after our wedding neither she nor I heard the report even."

Gerald looked at him pityingly.

"Why do you look at me so, Gerald?" he asked, the cold perspiration breaking out on his forehead. "Do you doubt my word?"

"No, not for a moment, Dennis; but—but you are mistaken. When Eleanor Morton married you she knew perfectly well I was a married man and that I had never been in love with Hilda," answered Gerald.

"Impossible!" cried Dennis. "She has told me a hundred times—nay, sworn to me—that she was ignorant of your marriage."

"May God forgive her then," replied Gerald. "She knew it perfectly, Dennis."

"She knew it!—she knew it!" cried Dennis, wildly. "If so, God may forgive her. I don't believe, though, such treachery could be forgiven—and as for me—no I could never forgive her."

"Hush! Vanstone—gently," said Gerald. "You must remember she is your wife, and—"

"Do I ever forget it for a moment? Is not the knowledge of it, the fact of it, the misery of my life? But you must be wrong, Dennis. She cannot be such a demon. She must have believed that you were Hilda's lover."

Gerald shook his head.

"Tell me why you say she knew it," said Dennis, looking at him fixedly with blazing eyes. But he was silent.

"Nay; since you have accused her of such double-dyed villainy you must speak, man. I shall never rest—never leave you in peace—till you have satisfied me on this point," he continued, firmly.

Gerald paused and hesitated.

"As you desire it, and certainly have a right to know all, I will tell you. On the morning of your wedding day I met your wife near Ray Farm, and I told her I was married," he said.

Dennis gave a low cry and caught hold of Gerald's arm for support.

"The miserable liar! The treacherous serpent!" he muttered. "Oh! Hilda, Hilda," and for awhile the shock seemed almost to have stunned him, and he stood clinging to Gerald's arm, as if half unconscious of what was passing around him, gazing wildly out on the boisterous sea.

"She knew it all the time! She knew it!" he muttered. "She deliberately deceived and ruined me! But she shall rue the day; she shall rue the day."

Gerald looked at him anxiously.

"I ought to have held my tongue and said nothing about his wife," he thought. "What a fool I am! Goodness knows what harm I may have done. How wild he looks. Come, Dennis," he added, aloud. "Won't you come below and take something? It's getting late, man."

Dennis started at the sound of his voice. He had forgotten where he was and who was beside him. He was thinking only of Eleanor, and of how he could best be revenged on her for her duplicity.

"Come below," he said, in a strange, dreamy voice. "Ah! yes, it is late, Gerald Ray. Hilda must be in bed and asleep long ago. Ah! what a bosh am I talking, boy. I was forgetting where I was. We are on the good ship *Bertha*, bound for Australia, Gerald, my boy, aren't we? Yes, I'll come below and drink to our prosperity in the new country. A rough night, isn't it? Your ship will have as much wind as her sails will hold to-night, I fancy."

"My ship—ah! I'm sorry you and I are not to make the voyage together," Dennis. My ship, the *Rosalind*, is at Plymouth. We put in

there, you know, and I shall transfer myself to my own craft when we get into port," replied Ray.

"What!" cried Dennis. "You leave us at Plymouth?"

"Yes; I'm bound for Melbourne—you for Sidney, you know," he answered.

"Ah! and your wife—where is she?" asked Vanstone.

"In Melbourne, safe and sound, I trust. We shall expect you to pay us a long visit, Dennis; mind that," said Gerald.

"Ay, I'll come and see you," said Dennis, dreamily, "if—"

And he stopped.

"If what?" asked Gerald.

"If—if I get there—to Australia, I mean," answered Dennis, in the same tone.

"Get there? Sure enough you'll get there before many weeks are over our heads. You're right about the weather. We shall have a rough night of it. Now tell me about Hartford and old D—shire and the old people at home," said Gerald.

And for an hour or two they talked of home and passed days, and then Dennis, the same dreary, far-away look in his eyes, retired to his cabin, and throwing himself on his narrow couch, slept the sleep of utter exhaustion, worn out by the violence of his feelings and the shock the news of his wife's utter worthlessness had caused him.

When he rose next morning they were entering Plymouth bay, and the first person he met as he went on deck was Gerald.

He started back in amazement as his eyes fell on Dennis. What a change had come over him since the night before! The look of blank weariness, of hopeless despair, had left his face. His gait was no longer dejected; his step no longer slow and heavy. A look of stern decision had taken the place of purposeless despair that had filled his countenance on the previous evening; and when he spoke to Gerald his voice rang clear and sharp and decided.

"You leave us here, then, Gerald," he said.

"Yes, yonder is the *Rosalind*, ready for sea I perceive. See, she has her 'Blue Peter' up already. In another hour's time she'll be off. I shall have just time to get on board. Well, good bye, Dennis, till we meet again in Melbourne. I shall tell Maggie to prepare for an old friend's arrival."

And he shook him heartily by the hand.

"Good bye, Gerald," replied Dennis, in the same clear tone. "I'm glad, ah, so glad I met you. You have done me a service you little thought of, my boy. You've given me something to live for, Gerald. I feel I've something yet to do before I die."

And a strange gleam flashed from his dark, stern eyes.

"We've all a duty in life to perform, Dennis. You, with a wife, and may be a family, have enough on your hands."

"Yes, I've enough on my hands," he said, strangely. "Good bye. You will hear of me again without doubt."

"Yes, and see you again."

And Gerald disappeared over the side and into a small ship's boat that rowed from the *Rosalind* to the *Bertha* and was speedily on his own ship, leaving Dennis moodily leaning over the bulwarks, watching the *Rosalind* as she spread her white sails to the wind and slowly and gracefully made her way through the crowds of shipping out into the open waters.

With a sigh of relief he turned away as the *Rosalind* began to disappear in the distance.

"Twelve o'clock," he muttered. "I've no time to lose."

And going down into the cabin he made up a small package of clothes, came up on deck again, hailed a boat, and was speedily rowed to shore.

"What hour do we sail?" he shouted to the captain of the *Bertha*, who stood near the gangway.

"Eight o'clock sharp, and wait for no man, remember," replied he.

And Dennis nodded, and in a few moments more was wandering through the streets of Plymouth.

As evening drew near he entered an hotel from which the *Bertha* was plainly visible as she lay at anchor.

He watched the crowds of passengers coming and going between the vessel and the shore, saw the sails spread, the anchor weighed, and heard the signal gun fired without moving from the position he occupied at the open window, and with a strange, hard smile on his lips saw the ship glide out of harbour, leaving him ashore, and slowly disappear in the darkness.

"Weren't you a passenger by the *Bertha*, sir?" inquired the landlady, curiously.

"Yes, but only as far as this. I'm not outward bound," replied Dennis.

"Do you stay here the night, sir?" she inquired.

"Yes, I think so. Have you a room vacant?" answered Dennis.

"Yes, with as fine a view of the Mount as you'd wish for, sir. Come this way, please."

And he followed her into a tidy room.

"That will suit me very well," he said. "What is the hour now?"

"Past ten, sir. What hour will you be called to-morrow, please?" she asked.

"Early—at six o'clock," he replied, and shut and locked the door behind her as she went out, and then threw himself into an arm-chair and mused long and earnestly.

Twelve o'clock struck, then one and two, but there he sat, the same hard smile on his face, and it was not till the first rays of daylight stole softly into the room that he laid himself down on the bed to snatch an hour of hasty repose.

His haggard, pale look next morning attracted the attention of the landlady.

"You are ill, I fear, sir," she said, looking at him curiously.

"I! No, not at all, thanks. I had a bad night. The sea voyage has upset me a bit, I think, but a good walk this fine morning will set me up again all right. Let me have my account and a cup of coffee and I'll be starting."

"And which way might you be travelling, sir?" asked the inquisitive landlady.

"Over to Penzance. I've friends there," answered Dennis, shortly; and walked away to avoid further questioning, and in half an hour more he was away and on the road to D—shire.

"I'll walk it," he said. "I won't stand the chance of being met and recognised."

And along the hot, dusty road from village to village he tramped, through the deep Devonshire lanes, decked with ferns, roses and foxgloves; through villages embosomed in rich orchards and quaint country towns, with streets steep and narrow, till on the fourth day after leaving Plymouth he found himself on the borders of D—shire, and took up his abode in a tiny inn to repose for a day or two, for he felt strangely weary, and his brain ached and throbbled always now.

Eleanor's words, her face, as she said "I swear it," were ever before him, waking o sleeping, and a strange longing possessed him to be with her again, to tell her he knew all, and was no longer her dupe. And then to—what?

He hardly gave form in his own thoughts yet to what was to follow, but the grim smile that spread itself over his face, and the dull fire that flashed from his eyes, would have sent a chill through the heart of Eleanor had she been by to see them.

But she was far away in her grandmother's cottage, congratulating herself—her transitory feeling of remorse having long since passed away—on her freedom, and counting up the income she had now become possessed of, for two days after Dennis had left Hartford Mrs. Merton died, and all her property was left to Eleanor for her own use, and she suddenly found herself raised to affluence again.

"Who would have thought grandmamma was

a miser?" she cried, almost exultingly. "I thought at most she would have left me a hundred and fifty a year, and she has died worth double that at least. Well, I've fallen on my feet this time."

And scarcely was the breath out of the poor lady's body than Eleanor began ransacking her cupboards, boxes and drawers, turning out odds and ends of lace and silk and pieces of old-fashioned jewellery, and rejoicing over each fresh discovery in a manner that horrified poor Mary Styles and shocked and amused Eleanor's Garford friends.

Then she set about altering the cottage to suit her own taste and convenience, and in a week's time, when the funeral had taken place and the old lady was laid in her quiet grave, the old cottage was filled with workmen charged to effect a complete transformation in it, and make it fit for the reception of its new mistress.

"Mrs. Vanstone will get through her own money as quickly as she did her husband's if she goes on at this rate. She is not fit to have the control of her own affairs," said Mrs. Jenkins, gravely. "Mrs. Merton would have done better to have left the money to poor Vanstone; but Mrs. Vanstone got round the old lady completely and made her believe it was all his extravagance and bad management that caused the smash at Stonyvale, whereas she was as much or more to blame than he. Well, I hope he may insist on her joining him in Australia soon, or I fancy Hartford and D—shire will find a good many holes to pick in her affairs before long. Poor Dennis, I'm sorry for him."

And the good lawyer shook his head pityingly.

"Is it true Mr. Vanstone and Miss Ray are still dear friends, Mr. Jenkins?" asked Mrs. Corfield.

"Still dear friends? What do you mean, Mrs. Corfield?" asked he, with surprise. "There's been no quarrel between them that I know of."

"No quarrel! Oh! dear no. But I mean, ain't they still a little—a little in love with each other, you know?" she simpered. "Mrs. Vanstone always vows he married HER in mistake. And there is some story about her finding Mr. Vanstone—now don't be shocked!"—and she laughed affectedly—"kissing Miss Ray by moonlight in the lane the other night."

The old lawyer turned very red.

"If you'll tell me the name of your informant, Mrs. Corfield, I'll tell him he's a prating fool," he said.

"Ha! ha! dear Mr. Jenkins, don't be so indignant. My informant was not a man, but a lady."

"I thought so! Forgive me, Mrs. Corfield, I ought to have known no man would have dared to spread such a tale about Miss Ray."

And Mr. Jenkins turned contemptuously away and with a low bow strode off, leaving Mrs. Corfield standing in the middle of the road in great indignation.

"What a bear the man is," she said to her friend. "Why, it was Mrs. Vanstone herself who told me."

"You don't say so, my dear Mrs. Corfield?" replied the friend. "Did Mrs. Vanstone really tell you such a tale about Miss Ray and her husband?"

"Yes, indeed. Eleanor is not very particular what she tells, and I don't wonder at her being a little put out at Mr. Vanstone's infatuation, but it would have been better taste on her part to have held her tongue and not published his peccadilloes to the public. I'm sure if I caught Jack out in anything of the sort I should be too ashamed to say a word of it to anyone. But dear Eleanor has no reticence. It's a pity, isn't it?" whispered Mrs. Corfield, confidentially.

"A great pity. She didn't get on well with him, did she?" asked the other.

"Well, Eleanor's peculiar, you know. I believe she cared for him after a fashion; but she is selfish, and vain, and very extravagant, and they used to quarrel a good deal, I believe," replied the Garford lady.

"Is Mr. Jenkins a great friend?" inquired the other.



[A TERRIBLE DISASTER.]

"Oh, yes; their lawyer, my dear, and Miss Ray's lawyer too. The firm have had the business of the families for years and years. Rude old man not to believe what I told him, isn't he? But he's devoted to Miss Ray in an old-foguish sort of way. Do you admire her?" asked Mrs. Corfield.

"Oh, yes, in a certain way," replied her friend. "She wants colour though, and expression, to my mind, but it is a very sweet, sad face."

"Yes. She suffered dreadfully they say when Mr. Vanstone threw her over for his wife. Miss Merton she was then, and Miss Ray had brain fever and nearly died, and everyone about Hartford was very indignant with him, and would hardly notice his bride at first," replied Mrs. Corfield.

"Very sad, and very unpleasant for a young married woman, my dear," replied the other.

"Yes, indeed. We were almost the first persons who noticed her and took her up. All sided with Miss Ray against her, and certainly she had not treated poor Hilda well. But that's hardly a sufficient excuse for Dennis Vanstone's having love meetings with her, is it?"

"No; but one must be charitable. Let's hope they were only saying good bye for the last time, you know," replied the other, laughing.

"Ha! ha! I daresay that was it," answered Mrs. Corfield, laughing too. "Now, my dear, good morning; I must be going home, or Jack will be thinking I'm lost."

Meanwhile the Rosalind sped swiftly on her voyage to Melbourne. She encountered a severe gale shortly after leaving England, but fought through it bravely, and after an anxious night and day the weather abated, and once more she glided calmly and swiftly over a smiling ocean.

Gerald's thoughts were often occupied with Dennis and his strange history during the voyage.

"He's just the fellow to get on well in

Australia," he thought. "If Jim Donovan, my respected father-in-law, is prospering in the way he was when I left six months ago, he may be able to give poor Dennis a helping hand. Heigho! I almost feel inclined to join him and give up this roving life. How pleased my Maggie would be if I did. Dennis might join us too, and we should be quite a family party. Not his wife though, I could never stand her. What a miserable pity he did not marry Hilda. That wife of his has been his ruin. I wish I had said nothing about my meeting with her that morning. My tongue is often too quick for me. He's bitter enough against her already I fancy without my heaping coals on the fire. Thank God for a good wife, say I."

And he fell to thinking of Maggie and longing for the voyage to be over that he might be with her once more.

He had not long to wait, the sea and winds were propitious, and he soon found himself in his own little house again with Maggie beside him, listening eagerly to all she had to tell him of what had passed in his absence, and in return telling her of all the adventures that had befallen him and all the changes that had taken place in D—shire.

Of course, the history of Dennis and Hilda occupied a great space in his narration.

"To think of his being ruined, dear, and on his way to this country," he said, in conclusion.

"But, Gerald," said Maggie, anxiously, "what was the name of the ship he sailed in?"

"The Bertha," he replied.

"Where can I have heard the name before?" she said, wonderingly.

"It is not an unusual one for a ship, dear," he answered.

"No, but I seem to have heard it mentioned lately," she answered. "Well, I'm sure when Mr. Vanstone comes he'll be welcome, and father will take him on to his own farm if he wishes, till he is ready to do for himself. Father's been making a deal of money lately, Gerald. He must be a wealthy man now."

"Yes, and guess what I've made up my mind to do, Maggie," said Gerald, smiling.

"What?" she cried, looking up into his face with bright, expectant eyes.

"To give up the sea, love, to leave you no more, but to join your father at the farm as he has so often entreated me to do. What do you say to that, dear?" he said.

Maggie clapped her hands for joy.

"Oh! Gerald, how glad I am—how glad I am. I never have liked to complain, but you don't know the weeks of misery and terror I have suffered when away from you, thinking of you always at the mercy, as it were, of the cruel sea. Now we shall never be separated again—never!"

And she threw her arms round his neck and cried for joy.

"The Bertha ought to be in in a few days now, little woman. Have you to-day's paper, dear?"

"Yes, it is here, but I have not had time to look at it," she answered, as she put it into his hand.

Scarcely had he set eyes on it than it dropped from his hand, and he uttered an exclamation of horror.

"Poor Vanstone!" he groaned. "Maggie, see here, the steamer Viga brings news of the wreck of the Bertha and the loss of all hands. Poor Dennis! And I was so longing to see him again and welcome him to our abode."

Maggie leaned over her husband and read the terrible paragraph with tearful eyes.

"All lost but two, and you, who went through the same storm, are saved," she murmured. "Poor Mr. Vanstone! Oh! to think, Gerald, that your fate might have been the same as his. Oh! I am thankful you are giving up the sea, love."

And she laid her head on his shoulder and together they talked over the terrible shipwreck, and mourned the loss of their old friend.

(To be Continued.)



[A SIMPLE OFFERING.]

LADY MYRA'S MISTAKE;

OR,
THE COLONEL'S SECRET.

A NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY GHOST.

GRIM and gaunt in the deepening twilight stood the ancestral home of the Helwyns, flinging its shadow deep down into the still, limpid waters of the lake, lapping the moss-grown terrace walls.

Grim, grey and gaunt—recalling memories of the long past, when knight and noble, clad in armour, had ridden out to victory or, to add an extra strain to the terrible battle fields of the Yorkists and Lancastrians.

Many a battered corselet, helmet and shield ranged upon the walls told how well the Helwyns had fought to sustain the honour of their name; the picture gallery preserved many priceless portraits of the long line of fearless men and lovely women, and Lord Marbrows Helwyn, a hale, hearty, middle-aged man, living quietly among his people, loving and beloved, was justly proud of his pedigree.

No stranger passing within view of Helwyn Towers failed to gaze and ponder on the beauty of the mansion and its expansive grounds. Artists and antiquarians raved about it, and the noble owner refused inspection to no newcomer.

Thus it was that many went down to Helwyn, some out of pure curiosity, others to work in earnest; and thus it was that Herbert Wilberforce lay stretched under one of the grand old oaks in the park.

The sun, a burnished ball of molten fire, was bidding this side of the world farewell, and all nature lay hushed as if by a magic spell. The birds had ceased to sing, the breeze had fallen, and the surface of the lake rested unruffled, as smooth and bright as a polished mirror.

The stillness was so perfect that Herbert Wilberforce began to doze and dream that he had wandered into an enchanted land, where the inhabitants had been doomed to sleep for a hundred years, and he, the Prince, had come to waken the charmed Princess by touching her ruby lips with his own.

And this dream was not without reason. He was the son of a gentleman, handsome and wealthy, and Cupid's wings had brought him down to the Towers to offer his hand and heart to Lady Myra Helwyn, a lovely blonde, the talk of the country and the pride of her native place.

There was an ogre in Herbert's fairy story in the shape and form of a middle-aged colonel, who occupied most of Myra's time, and was received with favour by Lord Helwyn.

There was something mysterious about this Colonel Strathblane. He had been introduced by a foreign count, and little was otherwise known about him, save that he held a commission in Her Majesty's service, had been abroad, smelt powder, as the saying goes, and had returned to England with the decorations of honour.

He was a handsome man, in the prime of life, proud, haughty to all save the Lady Myra, to whom he bent the knee of homage, and Herbert Wilberforce saw with jealous eyes that the long-moustached, commanding military man had a great influence over the lovely girl for whom he was pining and, almost "crazed with hapless love," would have willingly laid down his life.

How calm and lovely was this summer's evening, the grand old trees standing out sharp and distinct against the deepening blue sky, idle seas of green wheat sweeping up the sloping hills, and motionless billows of white clover resting among the verdure!

Suddenly the stillness was broken by the measured sweep of oars, and Herbert Wilberforce, rousing himself with a start, beheld a boat occupied by Colonel Strathblane and Lady Myra Helwyn crossing the lake.

"There they are again," Herbert sighed; "always together. As for myself I can scarcely get a word with Myra, she always seems cold and distant. Ah, me! What a child I am, crying for a star beyond my reach. At any rate, I must not stop here, or the gallant colonel will accuse me of playing the spy."

Glancing at his watch he found that he had an hour left to dress for dinner, and rising and shaking off the drowsiness that still oppressed his eyelids he walked swiftly towards Helwyn Towers.

He was in the act of mounting the terrace steps when he thought he detected the rustling of a dress, and, turning sharply, beheld the figure of a woman disappearing among the trees.

The figure was ill-defined, indistinct and shadowy, and Herbert Wilberforce felt a queer sensation creep into his heart as the memory of a legend connected with the place flashed into his brain.

It was this. Whenever sickness or misfortune befell the Helwyns they were warned by the figure of a gaunt woman who haunted the house and grounds until the evil had been accomplished or passed away.

"Ghost or no ghost I will see who it is," Herbert Wilberforce thought, and, retracing his footsteps, searched everywhere for the mysterious lady. But in vain, and the first dinner bell ringing warned him to return.

The figure in the park troubled him more than he cared to own to himself. He did not believe in ghosts, he was brave and fearless, but he could not cope with a mystery for which there seemed no solution.

"The interesting creature must have played a game of hide-and-seek with me behind the trees," he said, half laughing, half seriously. "I would give more than a trifle to account for

her conduct. Perhaps she was a footman's lady-love fearing detection. Bah! Let her go, she shall not spoil my appetite."

The dinner was a bright and cheerful one. Myra was radiant and apparently supremely happy, Colonel Strathblane chatty and full of anecdote, Lord Marbrows amiable, in spite of an occasional twinge of gout, and even Herbert Wilberforce bore up against circumstances.

"I do not wish to raise an alarm," he said, "but either my eyes deceived me, or the celebrated ghost of Helwyn Towers is walking again."

He wondered why the colonel grew so pale as he continued with his story. At all events he was not a Helwyn, and had nothing to fear.

"Pooh, pooh!" said Lord Helwyn. "Our ghost was laid long ago with a gipsy woman, who found her way here mushrooming in the park."

"My ghost was not in search of mushrooms, and not of the gipsy type," Herbert Wilberforce replied. "She was tall and thin and pale, and wore what I took to be a silk dress. I am going out again to-night in the hope of interviewing her."

"Better stay where you are," said Colonel Strathblane. "And do you not see that Lady Myra is disturbed? Ghost, indeed! A man who takes a delight in the solitude of evening may hatch up any number of spirits from the mists and flitting shadows."

"Thanks, colonel, for crediting me with a romantic turn of mind," said Herbert Wilberforce. "Lady Myra has no more fear of the ghost than I have. She told me the story herself, and if you like I will repeat it to you."

"As you please," said the colonel.

"On second thoughts I think I am out of order and should leave the narrative to Lord Helwyn."

"There is really no beginning or end to the legend," Lord Helwyn said. "If true, it does not reflect much credit on one of my race; if false, it was the work of one who had not a very good opinion of us. It is simply this: Sometime during the reigns of the early Henrys, when this place was built, a certain Roger Helwyn, of fierce disposition, slew a woman for daring to beg pardon and life for her imprisoned husband. With her last breath the dying supplicant vowed never to rest in her grave until the last of our race had passed away, and—well, that is all I know about the matter, save that the female portion of the servants have declared at times that they have seen strange things and heard strange noises, but the whole story is the result of idle superstition. About two years ago the lodge-keeper's wife declared that the ghost was in the park, and as I have told you it resulted in the capture of a gipsy woman."

"Then I am not satisfied," Herbert Wilberforce said. "With your permission, my lord, I will go round with the keepers and search the park. Thieves may be about. Your plate-safe would prove a tempting bait to a band of burglars, male or female."

"Do as you like," Lord Helwyn replied, laughing, "and if you catch the ghost bring her back with you, if she cannot give a fair explanation of her presence in the grounds."

"I presume the colonel will not join me in the ghost hunt?" Herbert Wilberforce said.

"No," was the reply; "I am better employed. You will at least catch a cold if nothing else, as a heavy dew is fallen. You had better put on a thick pair of boots and an overcoat, Mr. Wilberforce."

"Thanks for your hint," Herbert said, rising, "I shall do very well as I am. I must make haste or this wandering lady will give me the slip."

"How anxious he seems about it!" Colonel Strathblane said to Lady Myra, as the young man left the room. "One would think the matter of the greatest importance."

"Mr. Wilberforce is as good as a detective to clear up a mystery," Lady Myra said. "I expect he will be back presently with some astonishing news."

"I think the search might be left to the servants," Colonel Strathblane said, giving his

moustache a savage twist. "Mr. Wilberforce seems to take things into his own hands too freely."

"What do you mean?" Lady Myra demanded. "Herbert is as welcome here as the day. His father and mine were ever the best of friends, and years ago there was something like a boy and girl love between us. Perhaps had it not been for—"

"My appearance," the colonel interrupted, "this boy and girl love might have ripened into something deeper. He loves you still, Myra, I can read it in his eyes; and pardon me, but it is not folly to keep him here sighing and wandering about alone in a dejected state?"

Lady Myra shrugged her beautiful shoulders, and her upper lip curled with scorn. "You need not trouble yourself about Herbert Wilberforce," she said. "I could not give him my heart because I am not worthy of him."

"That is not complimentary to me," Colonel Strathblane said. "My darling, you must be more guarded in your speech. I know that you did not intend to hurt my feelings, but that remark has cut me deeply."

"I meant what I said," Myra replied, as the colour mounted into her cheeks. "He is thoughtful, studious and fond of home. I am light, perhaps giddy, and long to see the world and its amusements. Our minds and temperaments do not match, and I should make him miserable. In you I found a man after my own heart and inclinations. I love you, be satisfied."

The colonel shot a glance at the beautiful girl, and the expression in his eyes was not a pleasant one.

"Well," he said, at last, "we will not make the matter one to quarrel about. You know how I love you, Myra. I am your slave, and if love and wealth can make you happy you shall be so in the true sense of the word."

CHAPTER II.

HOW HERBERT WILBERFORCE MET THE GHOST.

HERBERT WILBERFORCE did not seek the aid of game-keepers or male attendants as he first intended.

When he reached the open air the moon was up and sailing grandly across the cloudless sky, and the park lay bathed in silvery light.

"I don't think I can do better than watch for a time," he thought, "for here I can see all who pass, enter, or leave the house. I wonder what made Colonel Strathblane so uneasy and apparently so anxious that I should not interest myself about the ghost. Leaving Lady Myra out of the question, I don't like the man. There is something false hidden under the ring of his voice, and he knows that I suspect him of not being what he seems."

The breeze was so soft that it scarcely sufficed to move the foliage, and the deep, dark shadows cast by the giants of the woods were almost motionless.

Herbert Wilberforce sat down on a rustic seat and lit a cigar.

He was in no hurry, and liked being there alone better than seeing Colonel Strathblane make love to Myra.

The cigar was almost burnt out when a form flitted through the trees and approached Helwyn Towers.

"Here comes my ghost," Herbert thought. "Now then for a blood-curdling adventure, or to call myself a fool for taking so much trouble."

The form was that of a woman, tall and stately, and it was evident by her movements that she did not wish to be seen.

Stopping now and then, hidden by the trees, she came on stealthily, and as she stood at the base of the terrace steps Herbert Wilberforce shrank into a deep shadow.

"I feel very much like a burglar myself," he muttered. "What an ass I shall look if the woman is no other than a servant. If she discovers me here she will scream, and perhaps take liberties with my face with her nails. How

I wish she would come into the light so that I could see her face."

He had not long to wait.

The mysterious stranger presently stood in the full glow of the moonlight, and Herbert Wilberforce saw before him a woman of no ordinary cast of form and countenance.

Clad in deep black, she might have been easily mistaken for one of the shifting shadows had it not been for the deadly whiteness of her face and the unnatural gleam in her eyes.

Stopping as if to ascertain that the coast was clear, she approached the well-lighted drawing-room windows, and, stooping down, laid her ear against it.

"Come, this sort of thing will not do," said Herbert Wilberforce, under his breath. "Ghosts have no occasion to listen when they can go anywhere they choose. We must have no eavesdroppers about."

Rising softly, he approached the figure at the window, taking care to block the way to the terrace steps, so as to avoid the possibility of escape.

The woman heard his footsteps, and, turning sharply round, held out her arms as if to ward him off.

"So I have caught you at last," said Herbert Wilberforce. "What do you mean by prowling about and listening? It is no use looking at those steps. I mean to know who you are and what your business is."

"Not here, not here," she replied, clasping her hands and wringing them. "If I have made a mistake I am truly sorry."

"Mistake!" Herbert repeated. "There seems to be no doubt about that. Well, it is some comfort to know that you are not the ghost of Helwyn Towers."

"Ghost!" echoed the woman. "God knows that I have wished myself dead and at peace a thousand times. There is no hope for me but the grave. Sir, I am a wronged—bitterly wronged woman, and I did not come here to-night without reason."

"What was your object?"

"Hush! not so loud, or perhaps he will hear you."

"He! Of whom do you speak?"

"I will say nothing more here," she replied. "Walk with me into the park, and I will tell you my poor story."

"Here is a nice predicament," Herbert Wilberforce thought. "This woman is evidently some harmless lunatic at large, or perhaps a dangerous one. Well, at any rate, I cannot do any harm by giving way to her whim. I will take her round by the lodge and have her secured."

More than an hour passed away before Herbert Wilberforce returned to Helwyn Towers.

He did not go at once to the drawing-room, but to his own apartment, and there he sat down and stared in a half-confused manner at the wall.

"What a small and strange world this is," he said, rising and pacing to and fro. "I wish this matter had been left to any other man but myself; but there is no other alternative but to go through with it. Let me see if I can read the notes I made hastily. Yes, I am to send to Mrs. Marston, Post Office, Jannetree, when she will write or appear in person as I may desire. I must be cautious, for if it is all a mistake I may as well pack up and take myself out of the country."

He replaced the note-book in his pocket, and throwing aside his hat, went downstairs.

Lord Helwyn was nodding over a book, and Colonel Strathblane and Lady Myra were playing a game of chess in a cosy corner when he entered the room.

"Behold the modern ghost hunter," said the colonel, playfully. "Well, Mr. Wilberforce, have you brought the spirit in your pocket?"

"No," Herbert replied; "the only ghost I saw was a woman who had found her way into the park and could not find her way out of it again. I acted as guide, and if heartfelt thanks can be regarded as payment I ought to consider myself well satisfied. After all I did not go out for nothing. The poor creature was afraid of

coming to the house for fear of getting into trouble, and she might have been left wandering about all night."

"The stupidity of some people is marvellous," said the colonel. "Check!"

"You were in check before you made that move, only Lady Myra did not notice it," Herbert Wilberforce said. "Yes, Colonel Strathblane, as you say, some people are outrageously foolish. I remember an instance of a certain adventurer who assumed a name and found his way into society by his impudence and plausible ways. He, to my way of thinking, was wandering about, and it was not until he was discovered by your humble servant that he got into his proper path again."

"Dear me, that verifies Lady Myra's statement," said the colonel. "You are a kind of amateur detective. Well, *chacun à son gout*."

"Lady Myra flatters me, and so do you, colonel," Herbert Wilberforce replied. "It is not to my taste to interfere with the business of any man, unless I know him to be a scoundrel, and then I do not hesitate to track him down. Why should I? The shepherd might as well hesitate to turn a wolf in sheep's clothing out of the fold. A man representing himself to be what he is not might enter this very house and when found out avow himself injured and ask the pity of the world. You are in check again, Colonel Strathblane."

The colonel forced a smile on his pale face, but his white teeth gleamed through his moustaches as he replied:

"I see I am, but really I cannot cope with two such good players as Lady Myra and yourself."

"You are hopelessly in check, colonel," Lady Myra exclaimed. "The game is mine. You have not another move."

"I think a pawn might save him for a time," Herbert Wilberforce said, in a low tone.

"There is no pawn near the king," Colonel Strathblane said, looking up sharply. "I fear your walk in the moonlight has affected your eyesight."

"I beg your pardon," Herbert replied. "I had a rather bad view of the board. The game is over."

"I have played enough," Lady Myra said. "This room is warm and fatigues me. I will retire for the night."

She gave her hand to Colonel Strathblane, who touched it reverently with his lips, and then to Herbert Wilberforce, and as she looked into his eyes she saw compassion and pity in them.

"How serious you are," she said. "I believe you saw the ghost after all, but are afraid of shaking my nerves. Good night. If you two sit down to chess don't quarrel over the game like naughty boys."

"That is not a bad suggestion," said Herbert. "Suppose we have a game just to keep ourselves awake. My lord is fast asleep all ready. It is time that his valet appeared with the candlesticks."

"As you please," the colonel replied, as he proceeded to re-arrange the board.

They played until Lord Helwyn awoke and bade them good-night, and as soon as he was gone Colonel Strathblane leaned his elbows on the table and sat staring vaguely at the ivory pieces.

It was his turn to move, but he was in a deep reverie and lost to all surroundings. Herbert Wilberforce did not disturb him, but watched him patiently and narrowly.

"I would give something to read his mind," Herbert thought. "I wonder if he is living his past over again? I wonder—"

"I have had enough of this," Colonel Strathblane said, suddenly. "Mr. Wilberforce, may I ask you a question?"

"Certainly, but I will not promise to answer it without reserve."

"When do you leave Helwyn Towers?"

"I thought of saying good-bye to the dear old place next Monday," Herbert Wilberforce replied, "but I find it impossible."

"May I ask why?"

"Because business of importance will detain me," Herbert said. "Now may I ask why you

have put these questions to me? Does my presence bore you? In other words, do you want to get rid of me?"

"I think it would be well for both our sakes," Colonel Strathblane rejoined. "Mr. Wilberforce, I am a plain-speaking man, and it is no use disguising the fact that we do not like each other. Unhappily we are rivals."

"Nay. I dispute that," Herbert Wilberforce rejoined. "If I have ever loved Lady Myra that is the business of my heart alone. She has rejected me, and I bow humbly to her decision. You are the lucky suitor and should be merciful as you are powerful. How have I sinned? What have I done to offend you?"

"Nothing directly to me," Colonel Strathblane replied. "Though I never shrink from war I am a man of peace. Come, Mr. Wilberforce, you are sensible and thoughtful, and will acknowledge with me that your presence here at the present time is not desirable."

"I must beg to differ with you," Herbert Wilberforce replied. "Under the existing circumstances I think my presence is not only desirable but necessary."

The colonel lost all patience and his brows grew dark.

"I will be plainer still," he almost hissed. "I do not like the way you watch me about."

"I join issue with you in that cause," Wilberforce rejoined, smiling quietly. "but we agree for once. I do not like the way you watch me. One would think that I held some great secret of your life. Well, let us say that we come to the conclusion that it will be best for us to part, and suppose it is you who leave Helwyn Towers—"

"You are insolent, sir."

"Your opinion of me perhaps does you credit," Herbert Wilberforce said, calmly. "I am not the man to be browbeaten or scowled out of any resolution I may take into my head to make. To put an end to this discussion let me inform you that I shall not leave this place for some time to come, unless ordered to do so by Lord Marbrow Helwyn. If you think it worth your while to speak to him on the subject you have my full consent."

Colonel Strathblane bit his lips until they became white and bloodless.

"As you will not listen to reason you must prepare for war," he said, rising. "I hope you will think better of it after a night's sleep."

As he spoke he turned on his heel and left the room.

"War to the knife, if you like," Wilberforce said, snapping his fingers. "The fellow is afraid of me, and I must keep my eyes open for foul play."

CHAPTER III.

THE MEETING IN THE WOOD.

SOFTLY blew the summer breeze over Helwyn Towers, and the landscape wore its most beautiful garb of the year.

Lady Myra and Colonel Strathblane were to be married in the autumn, and already preparations were being made for the great event.

The colonel's demeanour did not outwardly change towards Herbert Wilberforce, and the latter had the good sense to take no notice of what had passed in the drawing-room. They were civil to each other and that was all.

One evening Herbert was sitting in his usual place on the terrace, and smoking one of his favourite cheroots, when Lady Myra approached and seated herself at his side.

"Herbert," she said, "I called you Herbert years ago, let me call you so now."

He glanced at her as he inclined his head and saw that she was pale and disturbed.

"Yes," he said. "I see no reason why you should not. When children were like brother and sister."

"Will you be a brother to me now?" Lady Myra asked. "Colonel Strathblane has gone to London, and I want to have a long talk with you."

"With me?" Herbert Wilberforce said, opening his eyes. "Judging you by the last few months some strange alteration must have taken place. There was a time, Lady Myra, when you came to me for advice, but I had buried it with the past and laid it among my old dreams."

"Don't be harsh with me—don't turn me away," Lady Myra said, tearfully. "I can trust you, and I want you to tell me if you have heard any of the rumours which are being circulated about Colonel Strathblane."

"Name one of them," Wilberforce said. "Speak out. Unburden your heart to me as you did when—you were a girl."

"It is said that he is an impostor, and that his frequent short journeys to London are to recruit his purse at the gambling table."

"I have never heard that," Wilberforce said. "If the colonel hears it he must take means himself to stop idle tongues."

"It is cruel to him, and cruel to me," Lady Myra sobbed. "Was he not introduced to us by Count Schlissenger, of the German Embassy?"

"Yes. Slander runs rampant in such a place as this. Why pay attention to it? In a few weeks you will have said farewell for a long time to Helwyn Towers. I understand that your affianced husband intends to take you to America?"

"Yes, for a year or perhaps more," Lady Myra replied. "It is his wish and mine that I should see the great cities of the new world. Oh, it will be so delightful, Herbert, and I wish for the sake of old times you could go with us."

"You are forgetting what is being said about the colonel," Wilberforce said, gravely. "What if it should be true, Lady Myra?"

"It cannot be true, it must be false," she cried. "I want you to find out how these reports have been spread about?"

"In point of fact to turn detective again?"

"Do your best and you will earn my gratitude," Lady Myra said. "If there is a just law in the country the delinquent shall be punished."

"But what if it turns out to be myself?" said Wilberforce. "Would you consign me to one of her Majesty's doleful prisons?"

"Don't tease me, Herbert," Lady Myra returned. "I assure you that it is not a matter for jesting with me. I have not mentioned a word to the colonel, but I could not marry him knowing that his reputation was at stake."

"This I promise you," said Wilberforce. "If I succeed in discovering the alleged slanderer I will confront him or her with you and Colonel Strathblane."

"I knew that you would help me," Lady Myra said, joyfully. "Come sir, since you are so kind, here is a rose for your button-hole."

"And may I keep it, Lady Myra? It is said that dead flowers harbour bad luck, and I think it must be true, for I have had my share of mine. Yet I will keep this rose, Lady Myra, and will return it to you in its withered state, if I succeed in accomplishing the task you ask me."

"What is your reason for that?" Lady Myra Helwyn asked.

"I will tell you at the proper time," Herbert Wilberforce replied.

They separated at the sound of Lord Helwyn's voice. The old gentleman was in a towering rage about something which had happened in the Houses of Parliament, and he treated Wilberforce to a long oration concerning the night he helped to silence a number of impertinent Liberals.

To all intents Herbert Wilberforce was listening intently, but his thoughts were far away. He was thinking that Colonel Strathblane was one of the greatest impostors and scoundrels under the face of the sun, or the most injured of men.

At last Lord Helwyn grew calm.

"You do not take much interest in politics, Herbert," he said.

"I do not, and hope I never shall," the young man replied. "I am sick of wars between Whig and Tory, of petty obstruction wilfully

reated while the interest of the country is forgotten. I would rather spend one evening here gazing at the beauties of nature than see a five-column speech of mine fully reported in every paper. That is my taste, though I frankly confess that it is well that we are not all alike."

"I agree with you," Lord Helwyn said, laughing. "Come in before the night grows chill. I quite miss the colonel. I hope he will return in the morning, as he promised."

"Yes," replied Herbert, slowly. "The place does seem lonely without him. He is so full of life and is good company at all times. By the way, I am reminded that I must be absent to-night. I have received a message to attend to some important business for a friend; therefore, my lord, I beg that you will excuse me."

"What, and leave Lady Myra and myself alone?"

"My instructions are imperative," Herbert Wilberforce said. "In this matter I am not my own master."

"Then we must bear our grief and spare you, I suppose," said his lordship, jovially. "But come back to us with the return of the sun."

"I will do my best."

They shook hands and parted. Herbert to order his horse and Lord Helwyn to shut himself in his study.

Wilberforce met Lady Myra and detained her a moment.

"I want to ask you one question," he said. "Is it true that Colonel Strathblane has requested that your dowry be paid down on the day of your marriage?"

"Yes."

"Then that is all I wish to know. Au revoir."

The horse ridden by Herbert Wilberforce was a fine hunter, and it took him along at a rattling pace. In a few minutes the grounds and park of Helwyn Towers were left behind and the high road gained.

But Herbert did not keep to the dusty thoroughfare long. He turned his horse into pleasant shady lanes, and reducing the speed to a trot rode at leisure, looking about him and taking in the beauty of the scene.

The sun went down in a halo of golden light and ruby clouds; the shades of night gathered in the valleys, and summer lightning flickered above the hill tops, but still Herbert Wilberforce rode on, until he came to the quaint little village of Jannertree.

The straggling street bore the appearance of having been twisted by an earthquake at some time or other, and some of the houses hung lopsided fashion, as if they had quarrelled with their inmates and desired to pitch them into the road.

Herbert Wilberforce drew rein at the door of the post office, and, dismounting, entered a small shop, flavoured with bacon, candles, string, spice, and a host of other articles known only to a chandler's establishment.

A clean, civil woman appeared and asked his pleasure.

"You have received letters here for a certain Mrs. Marston," Wilberforce said. "Can you tell me where she resides?"

"I cannot," the post mistress replied, "but she calls every evening for her letters."

"May I leave a note for her?"

"I am afraid that would be against orders," the woman said; "but if you are quick you will have time to write it; and as I am going to make the mail up, I will deliver the letter to Mrs. Marston, if she calls."

Herbert Wilberforce purchased the necessary materials, scribbled a few words, and having thanked the post mistress for her hint and civility, posted the missive and rode away.

It was quite dark now, and Wilberforce, turning his head to the left, rode about a mile and halted by the side of a densely-shaded place known as Hair's Wood.

"That she will come I am satisfied," Herbert said, as he tethered his horse and threw himself down under a tree. "Revenge, if nothing else, will bring her. I wonder if, after all, she is a rank impostor and telling me a pack of lies in the hope of extorting money. No! She has

not asked me for a single penny, and I am sure by her poor style of dress that she has not too many of the world's comforts."

He lay musing thus when his sharp ear detected the sound of footsteps, and rising to his feet he went to his horse and leaned his arm against its glossy neck.

In a few minutes he saw the form of a woman hurrying along, and uttering the name of Mrs. Marston, softly, received an answer in the affirmative.

"Well, sir," she said, "you have sent for me, and I am here."

"Matters are coming to a climax," Wilberforce said, "and I must find means to take you to Helwyn Towers without being seen by the people. Under what name did the man you vow to be your husband marry you?"

"He called himself Henry Brimslow."

"And Colonel Strathblane is the same man?"

"That I swear," was the reply. "Confront me with him and you will see the truth written on his face."

"May I ask why you took the name of Marston?" Wilberforce asked. "This is a matter of so delicate a nature that I am inclined to hesitate before I act."

"I took my assumed name knowing that Henry Brimslow would flee at the sound of the name he gave me," the woman said. "He deserted me after treating me like a savage. The few hundred pounds I received on my wedding day he betted and gambled away, and when he found there was no more to come he left me as he would have turned his back upon a dog. Thank God my only child did not survive long, but was taken to a happier land. I will do all you ask me, sir, but do not keep me long in suspense. I cannot bear it. If you will not take me to Helwyn Towers I must go myself if the result ends in my death."

"Hush, hush," said Herbert Wilberforce. "You must be calm and patient."

"Calm and patient," she echoed. "Calm and patient when I know that Herbert Brimslow is basking in the smiles of a lovely and virtuous woman. Ask the winds to cease blowing. Force back the lightnings into the storm clouds. I live in a whirlwind of unendurable emotions. I feel that if I do not see this monster turned adrift that I shall go mad. The love I gave him has turned to hate—unutterable, awful hate. Why did he not kill me outright? It would have been more merciful."

"It seems that you or somebody who knows this man have been speaking of him," Herbert Wilberforce said. "To begin with, that was a very unwise act."

"I heard him spoken of as a colonel, and I denounced him as a gambler," was the reply. "I could not keep my tongue still to save my life when I think of my wrongs. He is much like a certain Colonel Strathblane who is, of course, innocent of the imposture."

"That opens up another question," Herbert rejoined. "Think of the consequences if you have made a mistake."

"My husband has a scar on his forehead which he received in a brawl with his fellow gamblers," the woman replied. "I bound up the wound for him, and nursed him while he lay raving with fever. I have made no mistake."

"Then meet me to-morrow night at ten on the private road leading to Helwyn Towers," said Herbert Wilberforce. "You will have to play a certain part which I will acquaint you with when I have hidden you safely away. One word before we part. Are you in want of money?"

"No. I have sufficient for my small needs. It is not reward I seek but justice—justice to myself and to the woman he would ruin and whose fortune he would squander."

She turned away and disappeared as swiftly and silently as a shadow, and Herbert Wilberforce before mounting his horse walked to and fro, fanning his heated face with his hat and breathing heavily as if something in his throat choked him.

"Mercy on me," he said, as he climbed into the saddle. "The more I hear the more per-

plexed I am. At all events the ghost of Helwyn Towers will soon walk and Colonel Strathblane or whoever he may be shall see it."

CHAPTER IV.

NEARER AND NEARER.

COLONEL STRATHBLANE returned to Helwyn Towers in the highest of spirits and best of humours. He fed the servants, visited the poor with Lady Myra, and the whole village talked of his generous heart and affable ways.

On the evening of the same day Herbert Wilberforce returned, and although Lady Myra looked askance at him he would not allow his face to betray anything.

"So," she said, when they were alone for a few minutes, "you must keep the rose for the present?"

"Yes, I have not succeeded, but time will show," Herbert replied. "Have patience, believe nothing, listen to nothing until you have plain proofs before you."

"What is your own opinion?"

"You ask me a question I would rather not answer," Herbert replied. "As you have trusted in me and given me your confidence, so you will find that I will do my best to set matters right."

It was nearly eleven o'clock and the dark hours promised to be stormy. Flashes of lightning lit up Helwyn Towers, and the thunder growled low down in the sky.

"This is just the sort of night when the ghost should walk," Lady Myra said, as she rang for her maid. "There is a great change in the colonel. All day he has been as blithe as a bird, but reaction in the form of a headache has set in, and you will see him no more till the morning."

"I do not feel inclined for sleep just yet," Herbert said, as he bade the beautiful girl good night. "I will sit by the window for a time and watch the storm. Hark! how it roars. I am afraid there will be but little peace in Helwyn Towers to-night."

Left alone Herbert Wilberforce drew up the blind, and drawing up an easy-chair to the window sat down and tried to peer through the gloom.

"It is a pity that the gallant colonel has retired," he said. "I had arranged that he should see this woman to-night, and she will walk the terraces for nothing."

Scarcely had he murmured the last word when the door opened and Colonel Strathblane entered.

"I am glad to find somebody about," he said. "The heat precluded all chance of sleep, and the storm has given me a splitting headache. What do you say to a game of cards to beguile away the time?"

"I am but a poor hand at games of chance," Herbert replied. "And my memory of cards fails me, save that I can recall playing an interesting game called 'beggar my neighbour' with my nurse."

"I only wish to be sociable," the colonel said. "Mr. Wilberforce, I have come to the conclusion that I spoke harshly to you the other evening, and I tender you my heartfelt apology."

His last words were almost drowned by a crash of thunder which seemed to shake the stolid old mansion to its foundations.

"I fear something has been struck," Colonel Strathblane said, in a hushed voice.

"An oak in the park most likely," Herbert said. "I saw what is called a thunderbolt fall. Draw nearer to the windows; the sight is magnificent. Hark! here comes the rain with a rush and roar like the ocean beating against a rock-bound coast."

The colonel advanced towards the window, but immediately threw up his arms and recoiled so suddenly that he tripped over a chair and would have fallen had not Herbert Wilberforce clutched him by the arm.

"What is the matter?" the younger man asked. "Are you afraid of the storm? Have you seen anything?"

CHAPTER V.

AT LAST.

"Who is that walking on the terrace in such a scene as this?" Colonel Strathblane demanded, as great beads of cold perspiration rose and stood out upon his brow. "See, there it walks! Ah! it is coming this way."

"I see nothing," Herbert said. "Sit down, man; you are not well. Let me open the window, or will you come out and let the rain dash upon your face? In either case it will do you good."

"No, no, I am very well!" the colonel gasped. "But what does the visitation portend?"

"I will tell you," Herbert Wilberforce said, clutching him by the shoulders. "It means that a woman, injured in body, and murdered in heart, is haunting you. In your guilty conscience you see Henrietta Brimslow, your wife. I see the phantom shape now, and, see, it beckons to you."

"Keep it back!" the wretched man cried. "I dare not look upon its face. Mercy! Mercy! Give me water, or I die!"

As he uttered the last word he sank in a swoon upon the carpet, and Herbert Wilberforce, pushing up the large French windows, admitted the woman he had first known as Mrs. Marston.

"Is that your husband?" Herbert asked, pointing to the prostrate man.

"Yes, as Heaven is my witness."

"Then leave me now, and remain quiet in the quarters I appointed for you. I will see you again to-morrow."

"What! is he not to be driven out into the storm as he drove me out to wander or starve or die?" the woman cried, running her fingers through her long, dark hair. "There is some compact between you. I will not go. Let me remain here until consciousness returns to him, or my voice shall rouse the house."

Herbert Wilberforce felt quite certain that the woman's brain was turning, but he did his best to soothe her, and succeeded at last.

"No good can be done to-night," he said. "If he leaves this house to-morrow his flight will prove the truth of your statement, and out of gratitude I promise that no further ill shall befall you in life. As you have served the Lady Myra up to the present, serve her now by going quietly, or the consequences may be more serious than you think."

"And when may I see her?" the woman asked.

"To-morrow."

By this time the storm had rolled away, and the stars shone out bright and beautiful again, and Herbert Wilberforce stood at the open window watching the woman as she hurried away. He feared that she might return, and breathed a sigh of relief when he found that she intended to keep her promise.

Wilberforce closed the window gently, and looked at Colonel Strathblane. He was coming round, and had already raised himself on his elbow.

"Where is she?" he asked, faintly.

"Of whom do you speak?" Wilberforce rejoined. "You are ill, and had better retire to your room."

"No—no—I dare not stay here," was the reply. "Stay, it may have been but idle fancy. Did you see the apparition?"

"I saw no apparition," Wilberforce returned.

"Then my nerves must be sadly out of order," Colonel Strathblane said. "How foolish and weak I am. Whenever there is electricity in the air it weakens me. I hope I have not given you much trouble, Mr. Wilberforce."

"Your condition alarmed me," Herbert replied. "I am glad to see that you are better, or I should have been compelled to ring for assistance."

The colonel looked wildly at the speaker, and then pressing his hand to his brow and muttering something, turned away and left Herbert Wilberforce to his reflections.

COLONEL STRATHBLANE did not come down to breakfast the next morning, but pleaded a headache as an excuse, and Herbert Wilberforce was so uneasy that both Lord Helwyn and Lady Myra noticed it.

"You must find this old place dull, I know," Lord Helwyn said, "but you must stay here until we part with Myra. The time will soon come, and then I shall go to London for a while."

"I cannot permit Herbert to leave us, however strong his inclination may be to do so," Lady Myra said, laughing. "It is unfortunate that the colonel is indisposed, as I had arranged for a drive in the pony carriage. It is a lovely morning, and I should enjoy it thoroughly. Herbert, will you protect me, and see that I am not run away with?"

"With all my heart," Wilberforce replied. "Nothing in the world could give me such pleasure."

The pony carriage was ordered, and Herbert took the reins.

"Lady Myra," he said, "I am going to take you to the person who avows that Colonel Strathblane is a villain and an impostor. I saw her last night."

"Her?"

"Yes; it is a woman," Herbert replied. "Let us understand each other now, Lady Myra. What I have done has been in the interests of honour and justice. If the man is what he is said to be I have done you a great service. If you reject him I will not ask you to give me back your heart."

She looked strangely at him and tears welled into her lovely blue eyes.

"Tell me plainly, what do you mean?" she said. "Do you believe that your information is correct?"

"Wait till you see my informant. Here is the house."

A boy ran out of the cottage, which stood a little way back from the road, to look after the ponies, and Herbert, assisting Lady Myra out of the carriage, escorted her through the little garden.

"You must be calm and brave," he whispered. "Courage, for true or untrue it is all for the best."

As he spoke the cottage door opened and the woman who had passed as Mrs. Marston appeared.

Herbert Wilberforce waved her back and led Lady Myra into the poorly furnished room. The two women thus confronted gazed keenly at each other. There was a strange contrast between the two; Lady Myra, young, radiant and beautiful and dressed in the height of fashion, the other pale, almost to ghastliness, and poorly clad.

Herbert Wilberforce was the first to speak.

"I have brought Lady Myra Helwyn to hear from your lips what you have already told me," he said. "What is your name?"

"Henrietta Brimslow, the wife of Henry Brimslow, who is passing himself off as Colonel Strathblane."

Lady Myra clutched the back of a chair for support, and she would have fallen had not Herbert Wilberforce caught her in his arms.

"Courage," he whispered. "If this be true you have been saved from a fate worse than death. Proceed, Mrs. Brimslow."

"I tracked him down until I saw him in this neighbourhood by accident. I saw him last night, and the coward fainted, thinking that he was gazing upon my spirit. Confront me with him and see if he will deny the truth of my statement."

"Shall I write a note?" Herbert Wilberforce asked, turning to Lady Myra. "I have brought writing materials with me."

"Do as you wish," she replied. "My brain is in a whirl and my heart is sick. I must leave all to you."

Wilberforce sat down and wrote, in a rather unsteady hand:

"THERE is a woman at Melton Cottage in this village who declares that her name is Henrietta Brimslow, and moreover that she is your wife. Come at once and clear this matter up to the satisfaction of all parties. Lady Myra is with your accuser."

A boy was despatched with the note, and Colonel Strathblane, having just risen, perused it with a calm face.

"Is the messenger waiting?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Bring me pen, ink and paper, and I will write the answer," said the colonel. "Stay, there is no occasion for that. Tell the boy to go back and say that I am on the way. He will know what I mean."

Colonel Strathblane left Helwyn Towers, but those in Melton Cottage waited for him in vain. Noon came and passed away and still he was absent.

Once they heard the report of firearms, and then the silence of the hot summer's day reigned again.

Colonel Strathblane would never keep his appointment, it was beyond his reach now, for beneath a tree in a wood hard by he lay with his face upturned to the sky, his arms outstretched, and in one hand the pistol which had done the work of self destruction.

News was brought to Melton Cottage that a man had been found dead, and Herbert Wilberforce guessed the truth.

"We will go back to Helwyn Towers," he said, quietly. "Colonel Strathblane, or Henry Brimslow, will not come to-day."

The ill tidings spread like wildfire, and at last the truth had to be told to Lady Myra. They took her to her room, and many a day passed before Herbert Wilberforce saw her again.

Henrietta Brimslow saw her husband's body as it was borne along to the inn to await the inquest, and then, as if the mission of long, weary years had been fulfilled, she retired to her room, and, falling on her knees, clasped her hands above her head.

The darkness of the night found her still kneeling as if engaged in silent prayer. Day dawned and she was in the same attitude.

An officer came to request her presence at the inquest, and the dame of Melton Cottage knocked repeatedly at the door of Henrietta's sleeping apartment without eliciting a response.

At last, the officer, losing all patience, suggested that the room should be opened, and when this was done they discovered the lifeless form of Henrietta Brimslow, kneeling as she had knelt in life.

Gaunt and grim stood Helwyn Towers, untenanted now, for Lord Helwyn had taken his daughter abroad. But time soon worked wonders, and once more the grand old house was opened.

Christmas time was approaching, but the guests were few, and Herbert Wilberforce's voice and footsteps awoke no echoes on terrace or hall.

He too had gone abroad, writing occasionally, but never referring to the painful past.

Lady Myra longed to see him. She had made a mistake; she had flung aside his love and faithful heart, and he had, nevertheless, saved her from becoming the dupe of an adventurer.

Would he never come back to her? Would he never condescend to listen to what she pined to tell him? It seemed as if the day would never come.

Christmas passed away, and New Year's Day came amid the ringing of bells and general rejoicing, but the season once so welcome found no echo in Myra's heart.

As night closed in snow began to fall heavily, and Lady Myra sat at the brilliant dinner table dull and silent.

Suddenly there came a tap at the window, and a well-known voice said:

"A robin desires to wish you all 'a happy new year.' May he come in?"

"Yes," said Lord Helwyn. "But a robin who can speak must have a name."

"Herbert Wilberforce."

"Why did you keep away so long, Herbert?" said Lady Myra, as a sleigh drawn by two spirited horses glided through Belwyn Park.

"Because I loved you, because I knew your sorrow, and did not care to recall it by my presence."

"But you were always my friend, and surely you knew that you would be ever welcome."

"Am I welcome now?"

"Of course you are, sir. How dare you ask me such a stupid question?"

"Only as a friend?"

The bowed head, the drooping eyelashes told their story plainly, and Herbert Wilberforce deemed it necessary to bring the horses to a standstill.

"My darling," he said, as he kissed the trembling lips. "This is the happiest day of my life, but I read in your eyes that there is a still happier one for me. My heart is yours as it was in days gone by. Will you give me yours, Lady Myra?"

And the answer was:

"Yes."

OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

ORDER OF ST. PATRICK.—This order was founded by George III. in 1783. The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is the Grand Master. The order is composed of the sovereign, sixteen knights, and six knights extraordinary.

MILAN CATHEDRAL.—In 1846 we read the following in an account of a visit to the cathedral: "In one of the subterranean chapels the body of St. Charles Borromeo is exhibited. He was archbishop of Milan at the time of the great plague in 1576. He is clothed in his pontifical dress adorned with diamonds, and a gold cushion supports his mitred head. The transparency of the rock-crystal sarcophagus in which the body is enclosed is sufficient to allow the features to be distinguished with ease. The quantity of gold and silver about the tomb seems to be at variance with the motto of the Borromeo family engraved upon it—'Humilitas.'"

THE ORGAN.—The organ was first introduced into Europe in the year 757, by Constantine Copronimus, who presented Pepin, King of France, with one, which was placed in the church of Saint-Corneille at Compiègne. In this instrument steam was employed to produce the sound, boiling water being placed in a reservoir under the pipes, the valves of which opened when the keys were touched, and the steam introduced into the pipes produced the sound. Instruments of this construction did not remain long in use, and the secret of their construction is lost. Some of the earliest wind organs had no fewer than four hundred pipes and twenty-six pairs of bellows, requiring twenty men to blow, and the keys were five or six inches in breadth, while the musician used his feet instead of his hands. In the organ constructed by Glabren, master of the manufactory of Ratisbon, and which had been ordered for the Abbey of Weingarten in Suabia, were counted no less than sixty-six different lips; consequently, sixty-six regulators, which governed the sound of sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-six pipes. Arriving at this point of gigantic complication, the organ was rather a kind of monument than an instrument of music.

PRESS WARRANT FOR SINGING BOYS.—According to the Sloane MS. in the British Museum impressment was practised in the time of Elizabeth for the purpose of getting choristers for the royal chapels. The following is a copy of the royal mandate, which bears the Queen's signature:—"By the Queen, Elizabeth R. Whereas we have authorised our servants Thomas Gyles, Mr. of the children of the cathedral chorine of St. Pauls, within our citie of London, to take upp suche apte and meete children as are most fitt to be instructed and framed in the arte and science

of musick and singings as may be had and found out within anie place of this our realme of England or Wales, to be by his education and bringing up made meete and liable to serve us in that behalf when our pleasure is to call for them: Wee, therefore, by the tenor of these presents will and require that you permit and suffer from henceforth our saides servaunte Thomas Gyles and his deputie or deputies, and every one of them to take up in anye cathedrall or collegiate church or churches and in everye other place or places of this our realme of England and Wales suche childre or children as he or they or anye of them shall finde and like of, and the same childre and children by vertue hereof for the use and service aforesaid with them or any of them, to bring away withoute anye letts, contradictions, staye, or interruptions to the contrary, charging and commandinge you and everie of you to be aydinge, helpinge and assistinge to the above-named Thomas Gyles and his deputie or deputies in and aboute the due execution of the premises for the more spedie, effectfull, and better accomplishing thereof from tyme to tyme, as you and everie of you do tendear our will and pleasure, and will answer for doinge the contrarye at your perilles. Given under our Signet at our Manor of Greenwich, the xxvth daye of April, in the xxvith yere of our reign. To all and singular Deanes, Provostes, Maisters and Wardens of Collegies, and all ecclesiasticall psons and mynisters, and to all other our officers, mynisters, and subjects to whome in this case it shall apperteyne and to everye one of them greetinges.

SPANISH INCONGRUITIES.—A traveller says:—Curious contradictions are occasionally found in the higher ranks. I remember sleeping at the house of a decayed noble, who received me with the utmost hospitality. My sleeping apartment, however, was destitute of the most common conveniences of life. My bed had no curtains, there was not a looking-glass, there was not a chair in the room. Such being the case I was surprised and somewhat amused at seeing a menial attired in a faded livery of green and gold enter my apartment with much state, bearing a basin of massive silver, which he was himself compelled to hold, because there was no table on which he could place that ponderous relic of the departed splendour of the house.

A LANCASHIRE ROAD IN 1770.—"I know not in the whole range of language terms sufficiently expressive to describe this infernal road. To look over a map and perceive that it is a principal one, not only to some towns, but even whole counties, one would naturally conclude it to be at least decent; but let me most seriously caution all travellers who may accidentally purpose to travel this terrible country to avoid it as they would the devil, for a thousand to one but they break their necks or their limbs by overthrows or breakings down. They will here meet ruts which I actually measured, four feet deep, and floating with mud from only a wet summer. What, therefore, must it be after a winter? The only mending it in places receives is the tumbling in of some loose stones, which serve no other purpose but jolting a carriage in the most intolerable manner. These are not merely opinions but facts, for I actually passed three carts broken down in those eighteen miles of execrable memory."

HOW TO MAKE TEA.—"The Jesuit that came from China, A.D. 1604, to Mr. Walker, said that to a drachm of tea they put a pint of water, and frequently take the yolks of two new-laid eggs and beat them up with as much fine sugar as is sufficient for the tea, and stir all well together. He also informed him that we let the hot water remain too long soaking upon the tea, which makes it extract into itself the earthy parts of the herb; the water must remain upon it no longer than while you can say the Miserere psalm very leisurely; you have then only the spiritual part of the tea, the proportion of which to the water must be about a drachm to the pint."

COACHES IN ENGLAND.—Coaches were first established in England in 1625, they did not stand in the streets, but at the principal inns. In 1637 there were in London and Westminster

fifty hackney coaches. Strafford says:—"I can not omit to mention any new thing that comes up among us, though ever so trivial. There is one Captain Baily, he hath been a sea captain, but now lives upon the land, about this city, where he tries experiments. He hath erected according to his ability some four hackney coaches, put his men in a livery, and appointed them to stand at the Maypole in the Strand, giving them instructions at what rate to carry men into several parts of the town, where all day they may be had."

THE TITLE "ALDERMAN."—The term alderman is derived from the Saxon *Elderman*; formerly the second rank of nobility among our Saxon ancestors, equal to the Earl of the Danes-Saxons. There were also several magistrates who bore the title of alderman; and according to Spelman, the *Aldermanus totius Anglie* seems to have been the same officer who was afterwards styled *capitulis justiciarius Anglie*, or chief justice of England. Aldermen were first appointed to cities in the year 882.

BURIAL OF A FLORENTINE CITIZEN.—On the 17th of May, 1491, four hours before sunset, the body of Filippo Strozzi was honourably buried at Santa Maria Novella. His was one of the grandest funerals seen at Florence for a long time. There were four files of friars and all the clergy of the cathedral, and those of San Lorenzo, a band of a hundred and fifty men, all the masons and workmen of the new building (the Strozzi palace), and all the peasants of his estates. There were two rows of banner-bearers and forty torch-bearers. All the kinsmen received mourning dresses, and four servants dressed to represent the sons of the deceased, in mantles with trains, followed the body.

ITALIAN PRIESTS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.—An Italian historian recounts how he had seen a Florentine, who was Archbishop of Pisa at twenty-four years old, riding in the streets of Florence in the daytime with a short, black Spanish cloak that came down to his knees, with a sword by his side, and with servants following him on foot with swords, in military fashion. And Cardinal Giulio de Medici himself used always to go to church, in Florence, in an open robe; without either mantle or cardinal's hat; and with a beard half-way down his breast and a posse of running footmen with swords around him, and not a priest or clerk in his company.

EVIL OMENS.—"Colonel Sharrington Talbot was at Nottingham," writes Aubrey, "when King Charles (I.) did set up his standard upon the top of the tower there. He told me that the first night the wind blew it so that it hung almost horizontal, which some did take for an evil omen." The same authority relates:—"The day that the Long Parliament began, 1641, the sceptre fell out of the figure of King Charles, in wood, in Sir Thomas Trenchard's hall, at Wullich, in Dorset, as they were at dinner in the parlour."

BURIAL OF CHARLES I.—After the execution the king's body was embalmed and removed to Windsor for interment. The Parliament sanctioned the expenditure of not more than five hundred pounds upon the funeral. No religious ceremony took place, the burial service being at that time prohibited. No tablet or inscription marked the last resting-place of royalty.

FIRST APPEARANCE OF WOMEN ON THE STAGE.—It was not until after the Restoration that women came upon the stage. In the patent granted to Sir William Davenant (1660) there was a clause:—"Whereas the women's parts have hitherto been acted by men in the habits of women, at which some have taken offence, we do permit and give leave, for the time to come, that all women's parts be acted by women." On August 18, 1660, Pepys chronicles:—"I saw the 'Loyal Subject' at the Cockpit, where one Kynaston, a boy, acted the Duke's Sister Olympia, but made the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life." On the 20th of November, in the same year, he saw the "Beggars Bush," the play being entirely acted by male performers; but he was at the same play again on the 3rd January, 1661, and then he records,

for the first time, he saw women come upon the stage.

TRADITION REGARDING BURNHAM BEECHES.—There is a popular notion in the neighbourhood of Burnham that the beeches were all pollarded by the Parliamentary army, who were encamped there during the civil wars of Charles I., and who used the timber for making gun-stocks. But some people doubt whether the trees were ever really pollarded at all, and certainly they do not look at first sight as if they had ever been subjected to such a process, so tall, so round, and so shapely are their forms.

FACETIÆ.

MR. O'DONOVAN ROSSA'S MOTTO.—"Dynamite is right."

A MUSIC HALL.—M. Rubenstein's receipts (£10,000). Moonshine.

YOKEL: "Ticket to Merton, muster."

BOOKING CLERK: "Return?"

YOKEL: "Return be danged! I bain't there yet!"

ON!

WHEN YOU BREAK YOUR WORD, what do the pieces consist of?—Lies. Moonshine.

AN EXHIBITION OF ALL NATIONS.—An exhibition of temper. Moonshine.

THE DAIRYMAN'S FAVOURITE EXPRESSION.—"Cheese it." Moonshine.

THE OPERA FOR CITY MEN.—"Rig-oleto;" ditto for auctioneers—"Mart-a." Moonshine.

IT COMES EXPENSIVE TO KEEP A RAVEN.—because he's always raven-ously hungry. Moonshine.

SEA-SIDE RESORTS.—For mothers, Margate; for nightbirds, "Rollicking Ramsgate"; for admirers of the fair sex, Broad-Stairs; for card-players, Deal; for young married couples, Turtle Dover; for poets, "Sonny South" sea; for too-bottle men, Portsmouth; for niggers, "Yar-Yar" mouth; for old soldiers, Scarborough; for sheep farmers, Sheerness; for undertakers, Gravesend; for rich men, Worthing; for Society editors, Jersey; for Home Rulers, Portland; for old maids, Isle of Man; for couriers, Hastings; for travellers, Bournemouth. Moonshine.

"ANNIE," said a fond husband to his wife, "what were the current expenses of last month?" "Oh," she answered, "only about a shilling." "Why, how was that?" "Well, you see I only baked cake twice, and therefore used very few currants."

QUESTION IN MATHEMATICS.—If two detectives can be put on a scent, how many can be placed on a dollar.

"SMOKING" HER.

"Is this a smoking carriage, sir?"

"No, ma'am; other end of train; but jump in here if you want't smoke. I shan't mind't all." Fun.

"IT'S AN ILL WIND."

"At! ay! lady. As yew say, we lives in blessed times. Yesterday I wasn't wuth a screw. Now, to-day I've heard of my boy Jack being washed overboard off the Cape, and drowned. I shall git all 'ees back pay and all 'ees clothes. I'm a made man." Fun.

SOMETHING WORTH LOOKING AT.

AGED PARTY: "As you say, miss, I ham indeed a-gettin' werry old, and I 'ave a-seen a manythings in my time—christinings, funerals, and weddings—but there is one thing as I've never seen, as I should like to afore I die!"

YOUNG LADY: "What is that?"

AGED PARTY: "A divorce, miss!" Fun.

CHOIR QUERIES.

The choir of Holy Trinity Church, Coventry, have given notice that they will go out on strike unless their stipends are raised. Whether the

basses require "treble" pay, or the contraltos an alto-gether new scale of salaries, or the baritones a "tenor," or fiver or so, we are not informed; but since the threatened action on the choir's part their performances have had a "striking" effect, we understand. Whether things will end in their getting what the vicar considers a "surplice-sage" of pay is another matter. The congregation hopes the matter will be settled soon, because, as it is, the various singers, in their desire to stand or fall together, "take each other's parts," even in the anthems! Fun.

THE MAN WHO ALWAYS BATHES.

FIRST GENT: "Water nice and warm this morning, sir?"

SECOND DITTO: "No—beastly cold!"

F. G.: "Oh!"

[Missed that day anyhow.] Judy.

ODD THOUGHTS FOR ODD FOLKS.

(By our odd man out.)

In the opinion of most odd folks nothing can well be more ill than a dyspeptic condition of the body; yet, when we come to think of it, what after all is indigestion but—all stuff!

When you have nothing else to let the wife of your bosom have, make a virtue of necessity, and let her have—her own way.

You may go on cutting your hair for years and years; in the end, however, it is sure to be even with you and—cut you.

What can become of the "bits of a woman's mind"? Does she really "give" them all to her better half? Alas, poor devil!

This is a horribly mercenary world nowadays. Years ago quarrelsome nations used to be quieted by the sword, now it's blunt.

But the world is even worse than merely "mercenary"; there really is no dependence to be placed in anything. Why, even a bonâ fide total abstainer may come to his bier! Judy.

GET OUT.

Why is it that a barometer, however successful he may be in his profession, is not likely to last very long?—Well, if you must have it, because he will have a brief career before him. Aha! Judy.

PROPER PRIDE.

LITTLE IRISH TAILOR: "Careful of your arm, sorr! Yes, sorr. Been vaccinated, sorr? None of that for me, sorr. No blood for me but my own." Moonshine.

THE POWER OF DECEPTION.—Russia.

Moonshine.

THE PROMISED LAND.—Ireland.

Moonshine.

MOTTO FOR THE (WIMBLEDON) WEEK.—"Butt me no Butts."

Moonshine.

MRS. SPRIGGS assumes that the present weather is called too-pickle because it is hot. Where ignorance is bliss, &c. Moonshine.

THE LADS OF SONG.—Ballads.—Moonshine.

PUBLIC-HOUSE SIGNS.—Bottle noses.

Moonshine.

A "PLANT STATEMENT."—That official Vandalism is about to cut down at Kensington the largest tree in London. Funny Folks.

AUGUST HORTICULTURE.

The best buttonhole flowers for August are the dog-rose and the dog-days-y. Funny Folks.

MUCH VIRTUE IN A "B."

Why do they call that Fenian sheet, filled as it is with ignorant and savage drivel, the "United Irishman"? Surely a better title would be the "B"-nighted Irishman! Funny Folks.

PARADOXICAL.

We have heard of a man so proud and independent that even when he hadn't a pound in his pocket he regarded the world with "sovereign contempt." Funny Folks.

"GOOD DOG!"

It is now proved beyond all doubt that the

best dog ever known was the poetical pointer who could both "point a moral" and "adorn a tail!" Funny Folks.

"QUITE TOO CON-SUMMIT."—The top of Ben Nevis. Funny Folks.

AND "NO ERROR."

AUNT TOWZER thinks the Ladies' Dress Reformers who advocate "dual garmenture" or "divided skirts" must be "downright pantaloonatics!" Funny Folks.

CUSTOMER: "Cabbages a shilling a-piece?"

GREENGROCE: "Yes, mum. Such a demand. Everybody wears 'em on their 'eds and down their backs." Funny Folks.

THE USE OF THE WALRUS.

In looking at this uncouth animal, the most natural question at once arises—What earthly service can such an ungainly, stupid beast render? What, indeed, is the use of its existence? But the answer is swift and satisfactory: were it not for the subsistence furnished so largely by the flesh and oil of the morse, it is exceedingly doubtful whether the Esquimaux of North America, from Behring Straits clear round to Labrador, could manage to live. It is not to be inferred that walrus-meat is the sole diet of these simple people, for that is very wide of the truth; but there are several months of every year when the exigencies of the climate render it absolutely impossible for the hardest natives to go out and procure food, and then the value of the cache of walrus-meat is appreciated, when for weeks and weeks it forms the beginning and end of every meal. The walrus responds to as many demands of the Inuit as the camel of the Arab, or the cocoa-palm of the South-Sea islander. Its flesh feeds him; its oil illuminates and warms his dark hut; its sinews make his bird-nets; its tough skin, skillfully stretched over the light wooden frame, constitutes his famous kayak, and the serviceable komiak, or bidarra; its intestines are converted into water-proof clothing, while the soles to its flippers are transferred to his feet; and, finally, its ivory is a source of endless utility to him in domestic use and in trade and barter.

Walrus famines among the Esquimaux have been recorded in pathetic legends by almost all of the savage settlements in the Arctic. Even now, as I write (November, 1880), comes the authentic corroboration of the harsh rumour of the starvation of the inhabitants of St. Lawrence Island—those people who live just midway between the Old World and the New, in Alaskan waters. The winter of 1879-80 was one of exceptional rigour in the Arctic, though in this country it was unusually mild and open. The ice closed in solid around St. Lawrence Island—so firm and unshaken by the mighty powers of wind and tide that the walrus were driven far to the southward and eastward, out of reach of the unhappy inhabitants of that island, who, thus unexpectedly deprived of their mainstay and support, seemed to have miserably starved to death, with the exception of one small village on the north shore. The residents of the Poonook, Poogovellyak, and Kagallegak settlements perished, to a soul, from hunger—nearly 800 men, women, and children. I was among these people in 1874, during the month of August, and remarked their manifold superiority over the savages of the north-west coast and the great plains. They seemed then to live, during nine months of the year, almost wholly upon the flesh and oil of the walrus. Clean-limbed, bright-eyed, and jovial, they profoundly impressed one with their happy subsistence and reliance upon the walrus herds of Behring Sea; and it was remarked then that these people had never been subjected to the temptation—and subsequent sorrow—of putting their trust in princes; hence their independence and good heart. But now it appears that it will not suffice, either, to put your trust in walrus.—Scribner.

it when I first saw you! I shan't ever forgive you! I hate you—hate you!"

Then she turned and sped away. He saw the pink cambric dress fluttering through the trees, her tawny hair floating behind her; then she was gone.

"Whew!" he said, "what a little spite-fire! I'm sorry I hurt her feelings, but it was only a dog, and she can get another any day."

Yet he was troubled for many days after. He was haunted by visions of her pale, wrathful face, her gleaming, black eyes, the scornful, bitter tones as she had said:

"I hate you—hate you!"

He buried Rover beneath the sod where he had fallen, and placed a flat stone at his head. But his conscience still troubled him, and, about two weeks later, purchased a handsome, intelligent animal, as near like Rover as possible, and took it to the little cottage near the forest. But the house was empty, and in answer to his inquiries he was told that the old man had died ten days before, and the girl Leo was gone, no one knew where.

So the handsome new Rover was taken back to Edgemont and given to his aunt, to whom he had told the story of the child Leo and her dog Rover.

Mrs. Avenworth, mistress of Edgemont, stood by the window of the large, airy parlour, an open letter in her hand, and a smile half doubtful, half curious, on her placid countenance. Her nephew, Eugene, reclined in a willow chair near her, and his blue eyes rested earnestly on her face, as though he would read her thoughts. He knew by her manner that the news contained in the missive was something strange and unusual, and he possessed a deal of curiosity. As she turned toward him, however, his lids drooped, and the indolent, careless look he usually wore settled on his handsome features.

"So strange—so very strange!" she said, more to herself than to him.

Then she came forward and stood before him.

"Eugene," she said, "this letter is from my sister, your aunt Della, or rather dictated by her, for when it was written she was already in the Valley of Death. Yes, Eugene, she is dead; died in far Germany, and among strangers. Is it not sad? But as to the principal part of this epistle: You remember that she adopted a child about five years ago, a little girl. She had no other children, and she made this one her heiress. She wishes me to take care of her until she is of age, and bring her up as I would my own daughter. She will start from Germany—but stop." She glanced at the date of the letter. "Eugene," she said, "this letter has been delayed. To-day is the day upon which the girl expects to arrive in England, and—why, Eugene, she must be on her way to Edgemont now. And if she finds no one awaiting her—how provoking!"

Just then, before her nephew could reply, there came a sound of wheels on the gravelled walk, and a carriage drove up in front of the mansion. Mrs. Avenworth hastened to the door in time to see a tall, girlish figure in deep mourning ascend the steps of the piazza. She glanced at her apprehensively, and her heart warmed to her at once. She looked so fair and delicate in her black robes, over which her bright, golden hair fell in a glistening shower. Mrs. Avenworth advanced to her, and, taking both gloved hands in her own, stooped and kissed her.

"Welcome to Edgemont," she said; "henceforth let it be your home."

The girl gave her a grateful glance.

"I may call you aunt, may I not?" she said.

"No, no!" replied Mrs. Avenworth. "Call me mother; it is a dear name."

"May I really?" cried the other, in delight. "I wanted to at first, you looked so kind and motherly, but was not sure you would like it."

"Like it!" said the elderly lady. "Yes, indeed, dear. Never but once have I heard that dear name addressed to me, and then it was by a lisping baby's tongue. He lived just long enough to utter the word, and then left me alone and forlorn."

The girl looked at her sympathetically; then, throwing her arms around her neck, she whispered:

"I am so glad, for you remind me so much of Mamma Della. My own mother died long, long ago."

"What is your name, dear?" asked Mrs. Avenworth, as they entered the hall arm-in-arm.

"Leo," was the reply; "and Mamma Della's name, Vance. Leo Vance."

"And your age?"

"Fourteen last April."

As they entered the parlour Eugene arose from his seat and came forward to meet them.

My nephew, Eugene Halton, Leo," said Mrs. Avenworth.

Eugene extended his hand with a winning smile, but to his surprise Leo took no notice of it, and, with a haughty inclination of her head, turned away. His aunt glanced from one to the other in surprise.

"Are you acquainted?" she asked.

"I have never met this young girl before to my knowledge," replied Eugene, as astonished as his aunt.

"I have met you," said Leo. "My memory is better than yours, Mr. Halton."

Eugene glanced at her searchingly for an instant; then he remembered. He saw once more the green, shadowy woods, the little girl in her loose pink frock, her yellow hair streaming over her fair shoulders, her black eyes sparkling like stars; and again he heard the fierce, angry words, "I hate you—hate you!"

Before he had time to speak Leo turned to Mrs. Avenworth and said:

"Mother, I am very tired. May I go to my room?"

"Certainly," was the reply.

They went out together.

"My dear," said the lady, when they stood together in Leo's cool, airy chamber, "why did you treat Eugene so coldly?"

"I am sorry if I displeased you," said Leo; "but almost six years ago he committed an act for which I have never forgiven him. Perhaps he told you the story of the little girl he met in the woods, Leo Russell, and the interview he had with her. I was that girl, mother. By a cruel act he caused a childish heart deep pain, deeper, perhaps, than he imagined. I have never forgotten it; I never can."

Mrs. Avenworth looked bewildered.

"But, Leo," she said, "it was but a trifle. He was thoughtless and careless, like most young lads, and it is wrong to hoard up little things against a person."

"Perhaps it was a trifle to all but myself," said Leo; "it was a deep sorrow to me, because I was lonely then, and had naught in this world to love and care for me but grandpa and Rover."

Her voice trembled, and she seemed like a little child again. She was so tall, so well developed, so mature in her thoughts and speech, that Mrs. Avenworth had found it difficult to realise she was so young. She had talked and acted like a woman before; she seemed a simple child now, and, laying her head on the elder one's shoulder, she cried softly for grandpa and Rover.

Mrs. Avenworth was puzzled. She scarcely knew how to treat this young girl, who seemed a child and woman together; so, without speaking, she smoothed the shining hair gently. It had the desired effect; Leo raised her head and brushed away the tears.

"How selfish I am," she said, "when you are so kind and good to me!"

In her heart she made a vow to try to forget and forgive Eugene Halton's cruel, thoughtless deed, and she succeeded so well that, when supper was over and they sat together in the parlour, she grew quite talkative, and told him of her travels and sang for him. And he listened and marvelled, too, that a creature so young should be so serious and intellectual.

He requested her to sing a duet with him, to which she acquiesced willingly; but when he ventured to ask her to favour him with the old bird-song, if she remembered it, her face grew

cold and set, and he knew the subject was an unpleasant one, and immediately changed it.

A week later Eugene Halton departed for his home in the city. As he was about to step into the carriage he turned and looked at Leo who stood beside him, and thought how cherry red her lips were, and wondered if she would care if he kissed them once; he was so old, (twenty-four) and she so young.

Perhaps she interpreted his thoughts; at any rate, she flashed him a quick, warning glance from her sparkling eyes, and with a good-bye and slight pressure of the hand, he sprang into the carriage and was whirled away.

Three years passed away before Eugene Halton visited Edgemont again, and when he did so he was betrothed. He showed Leo his fiancée's photograph one day, and she saw at a glance that she was a pretty, shallow, frivolous woman, and wondered at his choice.

"What do you think of it?" asked Eugene; and she replied:

"She is very pretty indeed;" then, seeing he expected more, she added, "I wish you happiness in your choice."

Leo Vance was in her eighteenth year, and possessed the same subtle fascination that characterised her as a child. She had altered very little in appearance; grown older looking and more beautiful, that was all. Mrs. Avenworth had come to look upon her as a daughter, and loved her as such. She had cherished the idea that some day Leo and her pet nephew, Eugene, would marry, and was consequently disappointed when she heard of the latter's engagement. But when Eugene told her how happy he expected to be, and dwelt upon the virtues of his betrothed, she smiled benignly and said:

"Well, well, Eugene, I am satisfied if you are. Now Leo is rather lonely here, I know; wouldn't Miss Derrington like to pay us a visit?"

Eugene thought she would, and a week later Ada Derrington arrived at Edgemont. Before another week had passed Leo knew that her criticism was correct; she was vain and shallow and frivolous, and, although love is blind, Eugene's did not blind him entirely, and day by day he realised the worldliness of the woman he sought to make his bride.

And now the question arose before him did he love her? No, he told himself, it was but a passing fancy that her pretty face and artless, innocent manner had inspired. Did he love any one? No, he was about to reply once more, when there came before him the remembrance of a brilliant, sparkling face with lustrous black eyes and waving yellow hair, and reluctantly, it is true, he acknowledged that he did. Reluctantly, because he was bound to Ada Derrington, because his sense of honour was great, because he believed that his affections were not reciprocated.

This last surprised and piqued him not a little. He was so used to being flattered and admired by the fair sex, so sure of his own irresistible power, and when Leo Vance received his homage indifferently, laughed at his compliments, ridiculed his dainty speeches, he realised that there was one woman not susceptible to his fascinations.

When he was attentive she was pert; when he was vexed she was charming; but, through it all, she maintained the womanly dignity and hauteur that warned Eugene that trifling or familiarity would be dangerous.

Only once had he overstepped the bounds laid before him. They were standing together near the open window, Leo and Eugene, while Ada at the piano was singing a ballad. There was no other light in the room save the soft effulgence of the moon, and Leo looked unusually charming.

She wore a dress of pale pink adorned with knots of filmy lace, and white roses at her throat and in her sunny hair. Her attitude was careless, yet full of grace, and one white hand beckoned the purple folds that fell from the gilded cornice to the floor.

Eugene noticed how fair and shapely the hand was, and thought he would like to clasp it only for a moment and feel the slender fingers tremble

as Ada's had done when he asked her to be his bride.

In another moment his hand had stolen up the heavy folds and bound hers, while his head was bent dangerously near the golden one. Only for an instant, however. Leo turned her head and gave him a quick, stern glance that reminded him of the little girl he had met in the woods on that memorable summer day. Then she turned and crossed the room to Ada's side, and in a short time their voices rang out on the still air, the sweet soprano and Leo's full contralto.

Eugene watched them as they sang—watched Leo, rather, for his gaze seldom rested on the pretty blonde, and when it did it revealed neither love nor admiration. There were both, however, in the look he bestowed upon the tall, graceful figure at her side, and he knew then that he loved Leo Vance deeply and passionately.

The next day, while strolling in the garden, he came upon Leo, reclining in a rustic chair, a dainty bit of needlework lying on her lap. A few commonplace remarks passed between them, then there was a long silence.

"Leo," said Eugene, at last, bending over her, "why are you so indifferent? Don't you know I love you?"

"Stop!" she exclaimed, and her bright black eyes flashed up into his. "How dare you address such remarks to me? You forget yourself."

"No," he replied, "I do not forget; I wish I could. Leo, you are cruel—cruel. Yes, I love you; in spite of your indifference, in spite of my promise to Ada Derrington, I love you."

She looked up into his pale face and saw an expression he had never worn before, a wistful, despairing look that touched her tender heart. Her eyes softened, and her voice was very kind as she said:

"I am sorry, Mr. Halton, for your sake and for Ada's."

Her manner encouraged him.

"Leo," he whispered, "tell me you love me; tell me you would be mine were I free."

An indignant retort arose to her lips, but with that pale, sad face before her she could not utter it.

"No," she said, "I do not love, I never can. Forget me and remain true to your promise. Ada will make you a—loving wife."

She could not say a good word; she felt a doubt even as she said loving, and, understanding Ada Derrington's nature so well, she pitied the man before her.

"Then this is your answer?" asked Eugene; and Leo bowed her head.

She could not speak; something arose in her throat and seemed to choke her. She averted her head to hide the tears, and when she looked round once more Eugene was gone.

Leo hastened to her own room, and, looking the door, sank into a wide-armed chair, and leaned her head on one hand.

"Cruel fate!" she murmured. "Yes, despite my heart-struggles and battles, I love him yet. It is there, and refuses to be crushed. Oh, Eugene, Eugene, if you are more miserable than myself I pity you!"

Leo's love was deep and strong, but her will was strong also, and knowing that Eugene Halton was bound to another, she resolved to hide her love. She knew she could never forget it, never cast it from her for ever, but she could secrete it from the eyes of men, so that none but herself would know of its existence.

A few days later Ada Derrington returned to her home, and Eugene went with her. When she said good-bye to Leo she whispered:

"I wish you would be bridesmaid at my wedding; it will be quite a grand affair, and my dress will be lovely. I have it all planned. Eugene is so handsome, too, I shall be quite proud of him. I detest homely men. I like Eugene for his Greek features. I adore Grecian features, don't you? But tell me, will you be bridesmaid?"

"I shall be obliged to decline the honour," replied Leo; "it—"

"What!" interrupted Ada; "not be bridesmaid at a great wedding, and wear a lovely satin

dress, and have all the people staring at you? Why, it is almost as delightful as being bride! I am surprised at you, and sorry too. Well, good bye; I'll write you all about it; in ten weeks, you know."

Eugene then advanced to bid farewell. Then he lingered, and looked at Leo wistfully, as though he wished to say more.

"Leo," he whispered, "is it yet no?"

"It can never be otherwise," she replied.

"And you would have me marry a woman I do not love?" he asked.

"I would have you remain true to your promise," she said.

"Eugene," called Ada, "do come! If you talk to Miss Vance much longer I shall be jealous. You're not a bit polite!"

A frown of impatience crossed Eugene's face as he turned away and followed his betrothed to the carriage. Then they were driven away, and Leo, watching them, wondered when they would meet again. Not for many years, perhaps; and for her sake and Eugene's she half wished that it might be never.

"Leo," said Mrs. Avenworth, a few days later, "you are looking pale and worn; you need a change. What do you say to a tour on the Continent?"

"It would be delightful," answered Leo.

"Will you really go?"

"Yes," replied the other. "We will visit Italy and France and, above all, Germany, where Della's grave is. I have always longed to see the spot where she was laid."

"It is a beautiful place," said Leo, "yet I would rather have it here in our own country."

Preparations for the trip began at once, and about a month later Mrs. Avenworth and Leo started on their travels.

Everywhere she went she was a favourite with all. Once she had longed for this gay life, for admiration and homage, but it failed to interest her now.

During her travels she met Mr. Lowry, a wealthy English gentleman many years her senior. Leo was not a coquette, but she could not help being bright and fascinating, and before they had been long acquainted Arthur Lowry realised that he loved her.

It was not the mad, impetuous love of youth, but a love deeper and more lasting. In his calm, dignified way he confessed to her one day, and asked her to be his wife.

She respected him, and knew how good and noble he was, and what a fond husband he would be.

"What matters it?" she thought. "I shall never love again. Mr. Lowry is a good man; why not make him happy? If I cannot be happy, I can at least be content."

"Mr. Lowry," she replied, "let me not deceive you. I do not love you, but I like and respect you. If, knowing this, you are willing to make me your wife, I consent."

"Then you are mine," he said; and he pressed the kiss of betrothal on her rosy lips.

So they were betrothed, and when Mrs. Avenworth heard of it she nodded slowly and replied:

"Well, Leo, I am very glad. Since you and Eugene could not love each other I would rather that Mr. Lowry should be your husband than anyone else I know."

It was then September, and in the following spring Leo intended to return to England. She wished to be married from Edgemont, she said, and her lover humoured her whim.

One evening, Leo, while descending the stairs in the hotel, saw a familiar form approaching her, and Eugene Halton stood before her.

She grew very pale, and would have fallen had he not stepped forward and caught her. He drew her to the darkened reception-room, where they found themselves alone.

"This is such a surprise," said Leo, smiling faintly. "I did not know you had left England."

"You did not?" he cried. "I wrote you my letter."

"Your letter?" repeated Leo, in bewilderment. "Mr. Halton, I received no letter from you."

Eugene paced the apartment excitedly.

"Is it possible?" he said. "Leo, I wrote you a letter about three months ago, apprising you of my coming, and—why, then, you do not know that Ada is dead?"

"Ada Derrington," said Leo, "your wife?"

"No," Eugene answered, "not my wife. She was taken ill one week before the day appointed for the wedding and died soon after. Leo," and his voice was very tender, "in that letter I repeated the request made over a year ago at Edgemont. I thought you would understand. Tell me now, is it yes or no? Say yes, Leo."

He outstretched his arms as though to fold her in their clasp, but she drew back and her brilliant face grew hard and cold.

"It is still no," she replied. "Mr. Halton, I am engaged. We, Mr. Lowry and I, will be married next spring."

Eugene stood with folded arms and regarded her sadly.

"He is a good man," continued Leo, "and loves me—"

"Not as I love you, Leo."

Leo flushed and her eyes drooped. It was growing dark very fast, but there was still light enough in the room for her companion to detect the emotions depicted upon her countenance.

"Leo," he pleaded, "at least tell me if you love me."

"Why should I tell you that?" she demanded, almost fiercely. "What good could it possibly do us now?"

Then, aware she had made a confession by those few words, she turned abruptly and walked to the curtained window.

Eugene followed her.

"Leo, it is not too late," he said.

She laughed hysterically.

"Yes, it is," she replied. "Mr. Halton, honour bound you once; it holds me now. Leave me, I beseech you. Your aunt is upstairs; go to her, anywhere, but leave me."

"I will go," said Eugene; "but not to my aunt. She does not know of my arrival; let her remain in ignorance. She would attempt to detain me, and I do not care to stay. Leo, is this your final answer?"

"It is," she said, impatiently. "Go! go!"

He turned and left the apartment. On the threshold he paused and looked back. Leo stood with her head bowed and her hands clasped despairingly. He hesitated an instant, then, with a last look, turned and hastened out into the darkness.

So for the second time Leo Vance sent the only man she loved from her.

The following spring Mr. Lowry, Mrs. Avenworth and Leo returned to Edgemont, and a few weeks later the intended marriage took place.

Six years passed by, and when for the sixth time since Leo's marriage the June roses bloomed, Leo came down to Edgemont to her old home once more. Her deep black robes and pale face told the sad tale; she was a widow. During those few years Arthur Lowry had been devoted and kind to her, and she grieved deeply when grim Death claimed him.

She was tired of city life, tired of living among strangers; so a few months after his death she went back to Edgemont and Mrs. Avenworth, who welcomed her warmly.

A short time after her arrival, Eugene Halton paid a visit to his aunt. He believed that Leo was abroad with her husband, and when he came upon her in the garden that June day he started back and drew his hand across his eyes.

"It is I," she said, smiling. "Did you think you had met a phantom?"

"It was so sudden," he replied, recovering himself. "I did not know you were here."

He glanced at her dress of deep mourning, and knew the story before she said:

"My husband died last February, Mr. Halton, and I came back to the old home."

He did not utter a word of compassion or sympathy, but both were expressed in the gentle pressure he gave her hand, in the kindly glance from his blue eyes. Then they walked slowly to the house, where Mrs. Avenworth awaited them.

Eugene longed to renew the subject uppermost in his mind, but refrained from doing so until the following autumn; and when he did, Leo did not reply as she had done previously.

And when the June flowers next filled the gardens of Edgemont with fragrance Leo Lowry became the bride of the man who had waited for her eight long years—Eugene Halton.

GEMS OF THOUGHT.

No matter what may be your station, you can so live that men through you and in you shall see God.

ONE contented with what he has done stands but a small chance of becoming famous for what he will do. He has laid down to die. The grass is already growing over him.

A MAN may be right in feeling that the world can do without him, but every man ought to feel that the world needs the best efforts of his life.

FAITH and persistency are life's architects; while doubt and despair bury everything under the ruins of endeavour.

NEVER chide your husband before company, nor prattle abroad of the mishaps at home. What passes between two people is much easier made up before than after it has taken air.

HE that makes others fear has in his turn more reason for apprehension than his victims.

THE best government is that which teaches a man to govern himself; the next best that which teaches him how to govern his family; the third that which teaches him to govern a community.

STATISTICS.

THE years 1874 and 1880 are absolutely without parallel in the annals of the Scotch herring fishery, 1,000,000 barrels having been cured in the first of these years, and 1,500,000 in 1880. In the decade 1859-68 the average was 670,000 barrels, and the highest 830,000.

THE POPULATION OF THE EARTH.—Herren Behm and Wagner, in the last edition of their book on the population of the earth, estimate the entire population of the inhabited globe at 1,456,000,000 persons. Europe without counting Iceland and Nova Zembla, is believed to have 315,929,000 inhabitants on an area of 176,349.9 German square miles, or at the rate of 1,791 persons to the German square mile; Asia is put down as having 834,707,000 inhabitants, on 809,478 square miles—that is, 1,031 persons to the square mile; Africa, as having 205,679,000 inhabitants on 543,187 square miles, or 378 persons to the square mile; America, as having 95,495,000, on 697,138.5 square miles, or 137 to the square mile; Australasia, as having 4,031,000, on 162,609 square miles—that is, 24 persons to the square mile; the Arctic Regions are assumed to have 82,000 inhabitants, on 82,061 square miles, or about one person to every square mile. The sum total, as observed, is 1,455,923,500 persons, on 2,470,903.4 square miles, or at the rate of 589 persons to the German square mile. The German empire comprises 9,815.6 square miles, with a population (in 1878) of 44,210,948 persons.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

PARMESAN OMELET.—Parmesan omelet is an excellent summer dish, easily prepared, and most tasty. Beat up three eggs, with pepper and salt to taste, and a tablespoonful of grated Parmesan or some rich cheese. Put a piece of butter the size of an egg into an omelet-pan; as soon as it is melted pour in the eggs, and, holding the handle of the pan with one hand,

stir the omelet with the other by means of a flat spoon. The moment the omelet begins to set cease stirring, but keep shaking the pan for a moment or so; then with the spoon double up the omelet; keep on shaking the pan until the under side is of a good colour. Turn it on a hot dish, coloured side uppermost, and serve quickly.

FIG PUDDING.—Six figs chopped fine after boiling them, three cups of bread crumbs, one-fourth pound of suet, one egg, one-fourth pound of sugar, one lemon, grate the rind; one nutmeg grated; boil three hours in a tin mould or bag.

CRULLERS.—Take four pounds of wheat flour, half pound of butter, four eggs, one quart of milk, one pound and a half of sugar, and a little ground mace or nutmeg; once ounce carbonate of soda; fry them in lard.

CUCUMBER CATSUP.—Grate three dozen large cucumbers and twelve white onions; put three handfuls of salt over them. They must be prepared the day beforehand, and in the morning lay them to drain; soak a cupful and a half of mustard seed, drain it, and add to the cucumbers, with two spoonfuls of whole pepper; put them in a jar, cover with vinegar, and cork tight; keep in a dry place.

WHAT?

WHAT does the bird, born in a gilded cage,
Know of the wild, sweet freedom of the air
Outside? the madd'ning thrill of boundless space,
Bound only by the heavens, blue and fair?

What does the child, whose life has never passed
Beyond the inland, narrow, small, unfree,
Know of the grand, calm, passionate, wild soul
That throbs in every movement of the sea?

What does the man born blind and deaf and dumb
Know of the sweet, strange secrets of the earth?
What do the mountains, standing stern and grim,
Know of the rapturous mystery of birth?

What does the woman, whose soft, silent lips
Have ne'er been pressed by kisses sweet as pain
And sad as joy—what knows she of a love
That all the storms of Time have never slain?

F. D.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MIDHAT PASHA and the other prisoners condemned to death for complicity in the murder of Abdul Aziz, excepting the two who confessed to having committed the murder, have been sent to Hedsjas, an Arabian province on the coast of the Red Sea, where, it is stated, they will remain in banishment for life.

THE King of Spain has conferred the Silver Medal of Honour upon each of the crew of the Carnsore (county Wexford) Royal National Lifeboat Iris in recognition of their heroism in rescuing the crew of the Spanish brigantine Paquette de Terranova as far back as September 25, 1875.

THE Berlin papers report that the other day, at the village of Airenndorf, not far from that city, seven children returning home from the fields took shelter from a thunderstorm under a tree. The tree was struck by lightning, and all the children were killed on the spot.

AN Austrian chemist is said to have devised some time ago a new sorfifice, the action of which is so rapid and powerful that a few drops of it sprinkled on the head and face will stupefy a man in a few seconds, and render him utterly defenceless. He gave it the name of Bändiger, or "tamer," and offered to sell the secret of its preparation to the Austrian Government. But the Government has not only refused to purchase it, but has ordered the police authorities to formally order the inventor to discontinue his experiments, and to abstain from using in

any way his invention, or communicating it to others, under pain of being criminally dealt with.

A ROAD locomotive—for war purposes, constructed by Bolle, was recently tried in presence of Count Moltke and several other authorities. The machine drew five guns with their carriages completely equipped, the load amounting to 800 cwt. The journey lasted about three hours and a half, with one halt. The locomotive itself weighed 575 cwt., and is capable of drawing 3,000 cwt. The expense is about two marks an hour. The velocity was equal to that of a troop of infantry, but might be much increased. There was no accident of any kind, and a good impression was produced.

A MOVEMENT is on foot in the West of England to mark the tercentenary of the defeat of the Armada by the erection of a monument to Sir Francis Drake and his comrades in the defence of England. The site fixed upon is the Hoe, at Plymouth, in full view of the Sound, where the English fleet assembled before issuing forth to give battle to the Spaniards. A considerable fund, which has received the support of the Prince of Wales and other distinguished persons, has been raised in Devon and Cornwall, and, with the object of giving the movement a national turn, a deputation from the original committee is, we understand, about to visit London and the larger towns throughout the country.

THERE is a rumour that there will be an Italian opera started next year in London in opposition to the Gye-Mapleson undertaking. The enterprise would indeed be a bold one—no doubt contending artists might give it a lift.

THE freaks of fashion are endless! It was all cotton ten days ago—it is all velvet now. Silver has been the rage for the past year or two, and to-day it is all gold—gold on blue, gold on cardinal red, gold on black satin, and gold let into black silk, gold on parasols, and gold beads as trimming to dress frounces. You might have supposed that Jupiter had descended on the earth again in a shower of gold, and that all our modern beauties were as much enamoured of gold as Dams of old. City men with their Japanese fans have quite put the ladies out of conceit with their Japanese things, and the Japanese parasol has disappeared, although you may see a good many parasols of embroidered silk on the Japanese pattern—some very startling ones of blue or cardinal red silk, covered with lace. In nearly all cases the lace is bound out straight by means of wire.

THE husband of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts has taken another surname, and is in future to be known as William Lehman Burdett-Coutts-Bartlett-Coutts.

PROFESSOR STONE, of the Cincinnati Observatory, declares that the late comet has split into two. As it is out of sight, we must accept his statement upon his responsibility.

WE are promised the visit of the renowned Professor Henry G. Vernon, who has obtained such a colossal reputation on the other side of the Atlantic for prognosticating the weather that he is known all over America as "the Canadian weather prophet." Professor Vennor is a native of Montreal. He scorns the use of instruments and ignores the science of weather gauging altogether, nevertheless his weather prophecies have always been so remarkable for accuracy that the Canadian farmer reckons on him for directions for sowing and reaping with the utmost confidence. Professor Vennor declares that he owes the skill he possesses entirely to observation of the meteorological changes of the atmosphere, which are as subject to rule as every other movement of nature. The professor makes light of the signal office and its four and twenty hour predictions. He forestalls the weather incidental to the whole of the coming year, spring, summer, autumn, winter, and his prophecies have been so correctly fulfilled in Canada that the scientific men of this country have invited him to come over to England and judge of the future weather-board here. It is thought that he has discovered the law of weather cycles and their periodical recurrence.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS are requested to observe that, although we never publish their names and addresses, we desire to be furnished with them in all cases, in addition to selected noms de plume, otherwise communications may not receive attention. No charge is made for advertisements appearing on this page, and no responsibility is undertaken concerning them.

ALEXANDRA W.—We cannot tell you of any better course than that you have already pursued. Write again or call personally. Copies of testimonials, if you can get any, might aid you.

JESSICA's writing is fair and legible, though it lacks good style.

YOUNG PORT.—I. See first paragraph of this column. 2. The supply of "moral and descriptive" poetry is always abundant and very often gratuitous. A list of the periodicals wherein such lucubrations are published would be too long for the space at our disposal. Make a few selections for yourself and write to the editors. The value of 100 lines of poetry is so extremely variable that no sum can be quoted—fame of author, intrinsic merit, suitability for and propriety of the publication in which they are printed being inestimable factors in the calculation.

EVA AND MARIAN.—Handwriting very plain, but strongly suggestive of the schoolroom.

H. W. TIP.—C being a lunatic, it is necessary that some sane person should look after his maintenance and administer his property. In the absence of any arrangement made by the Commissioners in Lunacy A seems to be performing this function. But in the event of the decease of C, who has not made a will and is not now capable of doing so in the eye of the law, his property would be apportioned between the children of the deceased B (who would divide between them what would have been their father's share), C and D. A being illegitimate would have no legal right to any.

IGNORAMUS.—Write to the editor of the "Metropolitan," published at 42, Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C.

INQUISITIVE.—I. According to the Act 33 Vict. gold to any amount is a legal tender; silver to the value of forty shillings only—allowing a payment of 100 three-penny or 120 fourpenny pieces; and a shilling's worth of bronze money or "coppers." 2. There have been two "Big Bens." The present one as well as the first is cracked; the two cost £4,000—clock and all, £22,000.

INQUIRER.—We cannot tell you the price of fresh eggs in Chicago, &c., &c.—an egg merchant might be able to give you the probable cost.

E. H. R.—See answer to "D. H." in No. 953.

A. S. B.—Concerning the Sandwich Islands see a paragraph which we insert this week in another portion of our paper, commencing "Since it has been stated that the visit to England of King Kalakua," after which if you desire so to do, apply to Colonel Judd, Claridge's Hotel, 51, Brooke Street, Grosvenor Square, W.

J. H.—Photography was known to Leonardo da Vinci in the fifteenth century.

JAMES O.—See answer to "A. S. B."

PAT.—Apply to the Chief Superintendent, Metropolitan Police, 4, Whitehall Place, London.

E. G.—One of the best and most harmless washes to clean the scalp is powdered borax. Put a heaping teaspoonful into a teaspoon of warm water. Stir it up, and pour it into a basin with a rounding bottom. Wet the whole scalp with warm water, hold the face over the basin, keep the eyes shut, dip the ends of the fingers into the borax water and rub it into the hair patiently and well. The whole head will be covered with a white foam like soap-suds. Wash it off with fresh water until all the lather is gone. Wipe with a soft towel, but do not comb the hair out until it is entirely dry, when it will feel as soft and clean as the softest silk. One such cleaning a month will keep the head free from dandruff. Two or three times a day a lady's hair should be opened with a coarse comb drawn slowly and easily from the scalp to the ends of the hair, for the express purpose of cooling the head and letting the fresh air get to each hair, down to the very root of it.

LEAH, MINNIE and LILLIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Leah is nineteen, tall, good-looking. Minnie is nineteen, medium height, good-looking. Lillie is tall, blue eyes, good-looking.

ELINOR and ISABEL, two sisters, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Elinor is medium height, fair, brown hair, blue eyes. Isabel is twenty-two, tall, fair, brown hair, grey eyes. Respondents must be from twenty-four to thirty, tall, dark and fair.

J. O'B., twenty-five, medium height, dark, brown hair, grey eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty with a view to matrimony.

SAM, DICK, BOB, and HARRY, four friends, would like to correspond with four young ladies with a view to matrimony. Sam is medium height, fond of home and children. Dick is tall, dark, fond of home and music. Bob is tall, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and dancing. Harry is tall, dark, fond of home and dancing. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-four.

INVINCIBLE.

She sat within her citadel
In coldly meditative mood,
And looks that would at once repel
Intruders on her solitude.
And not a star in heaven could be
From friendship more remote than she.

From out her turret window high
She looked upon the landscape round,
Held close communion with the sky,
And in exalted pleasures found
Her greatest joy—as coldly bright
As Venus on a wintry night.

Had she a heart! Ah, who might know
What passions beat within her breast?
What fires burned beneath the snow
Volcano-like she ne'er had guessed,
As she within her citadel
Declared herself invincible.

It chanced upon a summer day
When she all lightly was arrayed,
That love in armour stole that way
And cast his eye upon the maid;
Nor for one moment thought I wist
That she was his antagonist.

"My troth!" he said, "but she is fair—
The very one I'd choose to mate,
For never did I see elsewhere
A beauty so immaculate.
And lest my courage should grow slack
At once I will begin the attack."

Oh, dauntless love, 'twere vain for me
Thy plan of action to rehearse,
Or tell thy deeds of strategy.
In this most unheroic verse
Enough to know that strong redoubt
And iron bars ne'er keep thee out.

From out her lonely tower she leaned
So high the common earth above,
And through the vines that intervened
She caught a hasty glimpse of Love.
But for a moment, yet she felt
Her icy heart begin to melt.

He came again, and yet again,
Until she of her own accord,
To still her heart's bewildering pain,
Went down to meet her chosen lord,
Unable longer to repel
The conqueror of the citadel.

J. P.

RIFLE SLING, PIPE CLAY BOX and BUTTON BRUSH, three friends in the Royal Marines, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Rifle Sling is twenty-two, tall, fair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition. Pipe Clay Box is twenty-three, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of music and dancing. Button Brush is twenty-one, medium height, fair, fond of home and children.

CARRIE, twenty-two, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. A widower not objected to. Respondent must be fond of home and children.

LITTLE HARRY, JERSEY, LOUIE, and ERNICE, four friends, would like to correspond with four young ladies with a view to matrimony. Little Harry is twenty-two, medium height, auburn hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Jersey is nineteen, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and music. Louie is twenty-four, tall, dark hair, brown eyes, of a loving disposition. Ernice is twenty-three, tall, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and dancing. Respondents must be between nineteen and twenty-three, good-looking, fond of home and music.

ARTHUR W. and WILLIAM F., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Arthur W. is twenty, medium height, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. William F. is twenty-one, medium height, dark, black hair, dark eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty, fair, fond of home and music.

HARRY, nineteen, tall, fair, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen or eighteen, medium height.

BESSIE, eighteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty, dark hair and eyes.

MADAM MISCHIEF, nineteen, tall, brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a young gentleman from twenty to twenty-five.

ELLA, eighteen, tall, dark, blue eyes, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young gentleman from eighteen to twenty-two.

BLODWIN, nineteen, medium height, fair, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young gentleman from nineteen to twenty.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ISIDORE is responded to by—Marion, seventeen, fair, medium height, good-looking.

MORRIS by—Gertie, nineteen, tall, fair, good-looking.

LILY by—James T., twenty-one, medium height, fair hair, good-looking.

JAMES by—Alice A., twenty-one, medium height, dark, fond of home and children.

H. D. by—Charlotte, twenty-nine, tall, fair, fond of home.

ROCKING LEVER by—Annie, nineteen, medium height, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home and children.

HARRY by—Violet, twenty-three, medium height, brown hair, hazel eyes.

DASHFUL JON by—Nellie, eighteen, tall, fair hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

FLASHING LIGHT by—Jemima, twenty, medium height, brown hair, good-looking, fond of home and music.

ROCKING LEVER by—Kate, eighteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

G. G. by—Daisy, eighteen, medium height, fair, golden hair, blue eyes, good-looking, fond of music and dancing.

H. H. by—Poppy, nineteen, tall, dark, brown hair, dark eyes, good-looking, fond of music and singing.

HARRY by—Loving Milly, twenty-two, fair, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children.

HARRY by—Con, tall, fair.

JAMES by—Neil, tall, fair.

PIVOTING BAR by—Pollie.

COMPRESSOR BAR by—Maud.

CLIP PLATE by—Lilian.

ROCKING LEVER by—Violet.

VIOLET by—Laz, nineteen, tall, dark, fond of children.

DIAMOND by—No One to Love Him, nineteen, medium height, dark, fond of music and dancing.

GEORGE H. by—Maud, tall, dark.

GEORGE H. by—Viola, nineteen, medium height, good-looking, fond of home.

LIVELY DICK by—Evelyn, eighteen, tall, grey eyes, good-looking.

DASHING BILL by—Ulla, nineteen, tall, dark.

VORTEX by—Greta, twenty-one.

DARK-EYED NELLIE by—Sheet Anchor Jack, tall, fair, good-looking, fond of dancing.

HARRY by—Liza B., twenty, tall, dark.

JAMES by—Laurie C., twenty-two, tall, fair, blue eyes.

LILLIE by—Steam Wheel, a seaman in the Royal Navy, medium height, fair, fond of dancing.

ANNIE by—Hard to Starboard, eighteen, medium height, fair, good-looking.

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